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THE
**CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN'S
DAILY WALK.**

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THE
CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN'S
DAILY WALK.

BY

SIR ARCHIBALD EDMONSTONE, BART.

SECOND EDITION,
REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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THE following pages were suggested by the delightful little treatise of the "saintly" Herbert, "The Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson;" but neither from that, nor from Mr. Roberts' popular work, "The Portraiture of a Christian Gentleman," am I aware that I have at all borrowed my materials. My object has been to present a course of Christian conduct in the higher walks of life; I have endeavoured, therefore, to confine myself, as far as possible, to what may be considered strictly practical. This does not however exclude a distinct acknowledgment of those doctrines which have within these few years been so generally revived; and in declaring my adhesion to Church principles, I understand such principles as were asserted by our Reformers

and their illustrious successors, and upon which the Church of England stands. If I have taken up any position which may appear open to dispute, I trust I have expressed myself with the modesty of a layman, who considers himself little qualified to enter upon controversial topics: and though the convictions arrived at after careful inquiry may be satisfactory to my own mind, I have no desire to present them as a rule for others, since my object is rather the advancement of truth generally than of any peculiar system. And as the vineyard is sufficiently large for the humblest labourer, while devoting my leisure—the talent committed to me—in attempting, however inadequately, to recall a portion of my fellow-pilgrims from the noise and distraction of the world to the great object of their journey, I believe I am acting in accordance to His will, who requires from each of His creatures his particular service.

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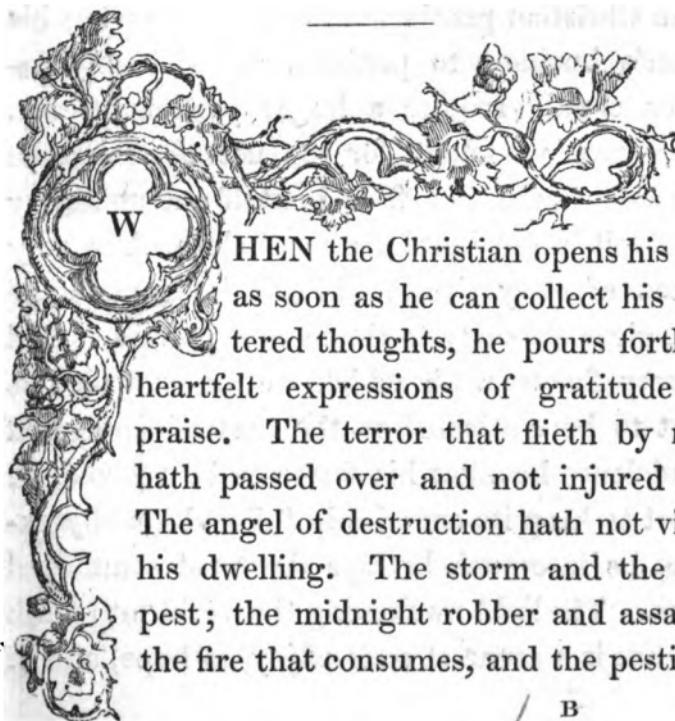


Chapter II.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN RISING.

“ When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like ; our bodies but forerun
The spirit’s duty : true hearts spread and heave
Unto their God as flowers do to the sun ;
Give him thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in him sleep.”

HENRY VAUGHAN.



WHEN the Christian opens his eyes, as soon as he can collect his scattered thoughts, he pours forth his heartfelt expressions of gratitude and praise. The terror that flieth by night hath passed over and not injured him. The angel of destruction hath not visited his dwelling. The storm and the tempest ; the midnight robber and assassin ; the fire that consumes, and the pestilence

that destroys ; innumerable accidents and dangers, which an ever-watchful eye only could discover, and an omnipotent arm ward off ;—these have not been permitted to harm him, and he awakes to the light of a new day sustained and strengthened by the refreshment of sleep. Or should any disquietude within, or disturbance from without, have come unto his household during the hours of darkness, he yet finds cause for thankfulness that the evil hath been restrained, and that a merciful Providence hath marked with an unerring finger the degree and limit of the visitation.

The Christian gentleman rises early, having his Master's business to perform, unless bodily infirmity should require a larger portion of rest. For as time is a talent, for the use of which he must give account, he feels himself not at liberty to waste it in self-indulgence and sloth. The very act too of early rising, while it invigorates the body, gives elasticity to the mental powers. And as every faculty with which we are endowed is meant to be cultivated to the best advantage, if by indolence he allow his frame to be relaxed, or neglect to keep its energies in full and healthy exercise, he insomuch betrays the trust committed to him. The light awakening the world into fresh existence is a scene at once of joy, of hope, and of

thankfulness ; and the commencement of the day, like the commencement of life, cannot be neglected without serious detriment. Indeed, nature seems to reproach those, who, when she summons all creation to their daily functions, turn a sluggish ear to the call : nor shall we do well, in common cases, to neglect her voice—"The beasts of the forest do move" during the night season, "the lions roaring for their prey seek their meat from God :—the sun ariseth"—and "man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening!" This we see is according to a settled rule, and though something may be yielded to the habits of society, and we must conform in a degree to its artificial restraints, still the less we interfere with or contravene the course distinctly marked by divine arrangement, the better, we may be sure, will body and mind perform their allotted offices.

Nor is the Christian gentleman without thought as to his external appearance. In the attiring of his person he is scrupulously neat, knowing that the outward bearing savours of the inward adornment of the soul ; but he is equally careful not to devote too much thought and attention to the array of that frame which shall so soon be dissolved ; and he studiously avoids any peculiarity

¹ Psalm civ. 21, 22, 23.

of apparel, as ill-suited to the sobriety of the Christian character. Consistency of deportment is his distinguishing mark; and as on the one hand he despises an over-nicety and fastidiousness, so on the other he esteems neglect and slovenliness unbecoming. A suitable propriety is what he seeks, as best calculated to recommend to respect the service of a Master who requires “that all things be done decently and in order¹.”

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

Chapter II.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN AT HIS DEVOTIONS.

“ Before we do any thing else, be we careful to consecrate the first-fruits of the day, and the very beginnings of our holy thoughts, unto the service of God. . . . Let not the day, when it cometh, find us sleeping in our beds, but awaken, and up, and ready at our prayers, according to his custom ‘ whose eyes prevented the night-watches.’ ”

S. BASIL.

THE Christian enters into his closet with a cheerful and serene countenance, for he is about to engage in his highest and best enjoyment,—intimate communion with his God. He betakes himself as a weak and dependent creature to the presence of an all-wise and all-powerful Creator. As a child, he approaches with confidence a tender Father; and if a sense of his sinfulness should for a moment bring before him the eye of a provoked and angry Judge, the consciousness of his

privilege, as one ransomed at a price by Him who suffered and died, and yet lives to intercede for him, will deprive that look of wrath of all its terrors, and change it into the smile of pity and of love. And sweet indeed is it to intercommune on such terms with a Being who “knoweth our necessities before we ask,” and hath every desire and disposition to supply them! If difficulties surround, there is a hand to guide;—if dangers alarm, there is a buckler to defend;—if sorrows circumvent, or pains distract, there is a tranquilizing balm ever ready and sufficient to soothe, to comfort, and to heal. No wonder, then, that to the Christian the uninterrupted hour of devotion is an hour “of peace that passeth all understanding!” Not, however, that this arises from any thing of his own on which he can depend for such inward serenity. No; he feels that there is strife and disturbance within, which himself is unable to calm and subdue. The spirit and the flesh are engaged in unceasing conflict, and he has no refuge nor security but in that grace which is promised as sufficient for his every necessity.

The Christian then kneels down, his heart tuned aright, and his whole feelings in harmony, to the delightful duty in which he is about to engage. Or should his thoughts perchance be wandering,

or his spirits flag, instead of thereby, as he is rather wont, concluding his devotions, he will in the first instance draw nigh to the well-spring of divine truth ; and quaffing from those waters, as the occasion may require, will bring to bear upon each unruly imagination an influence which at once composes, abstracts, and elevates. It is, indeed, a part of human frailty, equally humbling and bewildering, that the most trifling objects will ofttimes intrude upon our holiest and most consecrated moments : but in proportion as we can realize the presence of God ;—in the exact degree that we can place Him before our eyes in all the awful benignity of majesty and goodness ;—so will such objects be shut out from the imagination, and our meditations be freed from perplexing distractions. The Christian knows this by daily experience, and carefully does he now endeavour to enclose his thoughts within the solemn privacy of his closet, and by every appliance and means in his power, to fix them upon that Being before whom he is bowing down. The first words which he utters will be those of humiliation. Deeply conscious of the foulness and corruption of his heart, though he be unable to penetrate into its fathomless recesses, he implores pardon for whatever he may have offended during the past hours

with an earnestness which cometh not “out of feigned lips;” and if he can fix in particular on any known sin,—any allowed transgression of word, or even of thought,—he spreads it out before the Lord with a true and lively contrition; nor does he rest till the still small voice reply, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin¹.”

Having thus made confession of his sins and infirmities, and, as he humbly trusts, been pardoned and accepted, he now feels his heart enlarged, and his spirit roused to the expression of gratitude and praise. With fervent thankfulness doth he enumerate the various blessings he enjoys, and delight to testify his sense of them to his all-bountiful Benefactor. That he is born in a Christian land;—the child of Christian parents;—in an age when the Gospel, no longer derided and persecuted, is respected even by those who are strangers to its influence;—when its doctrines are spread abroad, and the Book of Revelation wide opened;—when the springs of life are unsealed, and all are invited to drink;—that he was initiated by Baptism into the true Catholic Church;—and while yet an infant was washed in the waters of regeneration, and admitted into covenant with his God;—that the sanctifying Spirit is ever whisper-

¹ 1 Kings xii. 13.

ing in his heart, to recal, to rouse, to direct, to animate, and to sustain ;—that immediate access is given him to his Maker by prayer, and a constant supply of divine grace afforded in the mysterious communion of the body and blood of his Redeemer ;—that the Holy Sacraments are administered by duly authorized persons ;—that the formularies of his church are qualified to affect both the understanding and the heart ;—and above all, that to himself hath saving knowledge been brought with a certainty that cannot be shaken by sophistry or device ;—and with an efficacy of which he is conscious in his daily experience ;—that the Gospel is indeed to him “a savour of life unto life¹,” since he hath embraced it with an hearty, though humble, sincerity ;—these will afford him meet topics for thanksgiving and praise, which, though he may be unable adequately to express in words, the free-will offering of the heart will readily pour forth.

Nor is it only for spiritual mercies that he finds cause to be grateful. He is abundantly surrounded with temporal blessings, which lighten the load, and relieve the journey of life ; and if in his course some of these have fallen away ;—some, perhaps, with which he might think he

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

could least easily part ;—he yet possesses enough, and far more than enough, to lead him to join in the admiration of the Psalmist: “ Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him ¹? ” He has been allotted a station above the reach of want ; nor is his daily bread extorted from the unwilling soil by the labour of his arm and with the sweat of his brow. He is ignorant of the anxieties and perplexities of poverty ; nor has he ever been exposed to those temptations which the uncertainty or the dearth of the necessaries of life too often produce. Hunger and cold he knows only by report ; nor is his inward peace disturbed, or social intercourse chilled, by the harassing cares of a precarious existence. He has received an education which affords exercise for our highest and noblest qualities. A range of enjoyments is opened before him of intellectual pursuit, which is little dependent upon outward circumstances ; and though these enjoyments may not be unalloyed, and his line of duty or occupation be at times oppressive and wearisome ; though tastes may have been called forth of which he is prevented the indulgence, and he may be open to solicitudes peculiar to his position ; still let him compare that

¹ Psalm viii. 4.

position with any other inferior, and if he would be unwilling to make the exchange, it is evident that he hath a wide field for gratitude, which he is not backward nor cold in expressing. But even if his prospect be dark and overcast;—when sorrow and suffering press down his soul;—in the sacred hour of devotion he finds his special solace: and as in drinking the cup which his Saviour drank before, he enjoys the privilege of closer intercommunion, never doth he realize more fully than at this time the blessed confidence which David felt: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me¹.”

Intercession, also, is another and an important part of his devotions. The Christian’s philanthropy is not limited by space, but is co-extensive with the whole circle of mankind. Sprung from one common stock, destined to the same glorious end, except where the merciful design is marred by wilful disobedience, he looks on the human race as one vast fraternity, and earnestly desires that it may be united in one common bond and fellowship. But though his love be expansive, it is not indiscriminate; it is graduated according

¹ Psalm xxiii. 4.

to the laws which nature has implanted, and glowing with intenser warmth within the closer limits of domestic affection, it thence diffuses a benign but mitigated influence beyond. The first objects, therefore, of the Christian's intercession are his immediate family and kindred. He scrutinizes the wants of each with a close and anxious eye, and fervently beseeches an all-bountiful Providence that He will be graciously pleased to bestow on those so near and dear to him whatever they may need both for body and soul. In sickness or in sorrow, relief and consolation; in wealth and in joy, a temperate and chastened spirit; and, above all, such a share of the blessings of His grace, that every step they take may be advancing them towards a glorious inheritance.

From the narrower he proceeds to the more comprehensive circuit. He prays for the welfare and prosperity of his country; for her rulers, that they may be guided by wisdom, and firmly and indifferently administer the laws; that virtue may be encouraged, evil-doers confounded; and, to sum up all in the beautiful words of the Liturgy, "that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations." Finally, he intercedes for the whole state of Christ's Church, especially for that branch

of it to which he belongs; for her Bishops and Pastors, and all congregations committed to their charge; and fervently does he pray that those differences and disputings, which argue too much of strife and confusion, may cease; that all who profess the faith of Him who died and rose again, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us," may be led to do so in unity and brotherly love; and that the time may draw near when His kingdom shall "come," and "His saving health be made known unto all nations;" when the Gospel sound shall be heard to the ends of the earth; and people of every clime and language be brought into "one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord!"

The Christian's family is a portion of the Church over which he is appointed. When his private devotions, therefore, are finished, he summons the domestic circle around him, and then, in the name of his assembled household, offers up praises and thanksgiving to the Giver of all good, more gene-

¹ It may be well to remark, that Manuals of Prayer should not be omitted as valuable aids to private devotion; and among many excellent ones which may be profitably used, in those of our elder divines especially, from Andrewes and Taylor, to Ken, Kettlewell, and Wilson, a spirit of pure and primitive piety breathes, peculiarly in unison with that which pervades our inestimable Liturgy.

rally expressed but not less fervent than when he poured forth his own individual supplications. In truth he knows how to value such collective worship. Where two or three are gathered together, there is He in the midst of them; and if family union is a blessing beyond all price, how can differences or enmities dwell among those who thus habitually kneel down together before "the Author of peace, and the lover of concord?"

Chapter III.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN AT HIS BUSINESS.

“ If we be Christians in earnest, certainly the inner rooms of our hearts, which are the holy of holies, are reserved for the Almighty ; the outer courts may be for the common resort of lawful cares and desires.”

BISHOP HALL.

As the Christian aspires to an habitual communion with his God, so is he likewise called for the most part to a daily intercourse with men. His eyes may be fixed on heaven, but his walk will still be upon earth. It may be, that his business lieth not “in the great waters :” that he is far removed from scenes of ordinary concourse and occupation ; he is, nevertheless, not severed from the common interest, an unconcerned bystander, and disengaged looker-on. As a constituent member of one general family, to which he is bound by ties of providential disposing, however isolated his vocation, and remote his path, he is not the

more free to think himself alone, and disconnected with the social order around him. We have reason to believe that we are all intended for some peculiar position within this great sphere of action ; nor is it, perhaps, speculating too far to imagine, that our energies are here called forth in a specific line of exertion with reference to the objects on which they will be employed hereafter. Be this, however, as it may, the Christian Gentleman knows that whatever place he is appointed to occupy, is surrounded by its own responsibilities and duties. It is a miserable perversion of the bounties of Providence to suppose they may be lavished on mere idleness or amusement : it is a woeful misapplication of the graces and ornaments of station to imagine them only intended as handmaids to vanity, selfishness, or pride. The greater liberty he possesses on this matter, the greater will be his caution, lest this liberty be ill employed, since if a rich talent be diverted from its legitimate purpose, the account to be given for its abuse will be so much the more fearful. The callings of men, it is true, are divers, as are their mental qualities ; and their dispositions, and the walks of life, are scarcely less multifarious ; still, whether they lead through more public haunts, or be hidden within the seclusions of privacy and retirement, they must all converge toward the

same point ; and the welfare of others on a more or less extensive scale, is the object to which exertion must be ultimately directed.

It is a question indeed of no little importance as to the degree of freedom which the Christian actually possesses in his choice of occupation. It must often be entirely beyond his control, and he may find himself in a situation unfavourable to his spiritual growth, without the power of changing or improving his position. When this is the case, he accepts it as the sphere selected for his peculiar trial and discipline. He does not fret and disturb himself that so it should be, nor does he dissipate his energies in unprofitably speculating how he might have acted, if more happily placed. His business lies on the scene before him. Here he prepares to perform his part, and to it he adjusts his powers.

But this is not to be done by temporizing accommodation, nor by in any degree lowering his own standard ; but by consistent firmness united with sound discretion he first accustoms, then perhaps reconciles those whom he finds prejudiced against his principles ; and gradually renders the path less difficult to such as may be persuaded to follow in the same course. A single light in a dangerous place will be more useful than a blaze where the way is safe ; and it is not

easy to say how much the influence of religion, even in an individual case, may not tend to purify a whole vitiated atmosphere. Thus it is then that a Christian acts under circumstances which of themselves would bear an untoward appearance: and so in the mystery of God's dealings with His creatures, may good be elicited from seeming evil.

But this does not apply to one who has the option of a course of life before him. "Lead me not into temptation" is not merely on his lips, but essentially influences his conduct; and he is feelingly alive to the responsibility attached to a right selection. That his employment be such as may more or less directly tend to his own best interests, and operate beneficially as regards his fellow-men, is his first desire; and though other objects may not be overlooked, they will only hold a secondary place.

Whatever then be his line of duty, on the world he enters as his proper scene of action; yet he approaches it as the soldier approaches the field of conflict. He is aware that its paths are especially perilous, and that the vigour and hardihood of his soul will be put to the strongest proof. Can any one "touch pitch and not be defiled" ¹? can he intermeddle with the world without contracting a worldly spirit? Difficult as it may

¹ Ecclesiasticus xiii. 1.

be to go against the stream ; however arduous to steer aright amid shoals and rocks at every turn ; to this labour is each true disciple appointed ; and in proportion to the obstacles he avoids or surmounts, doth his arm acquire strength, and his eye steadiness. With every care, however, that he can take,—with all the aid that he can gain,—his course is yet a hazardous one ; and on entering on the ordinary business of his calling, the Christian Gentleman is conscious that he will have principles to encounter at variance with those which he has been endeavouring to cultivate in his closet.

The first thing that he has to do is to examine into himself. He closely scrutinizes his own motives : he searches deeply into the soil whence his actions spring, that there be no cankerworm corrupting the root. He is scrupulously jealous as to his integrity, that there be nothing at the bottom of his heart to belie his lips. And when he has thus made sure of himself ; when he feels his feet firmly planted in uprightness and sincerity, he is then able to come in contact with others, not only with less risk of miscarriage, but with a reasonable hope that those with whom he has to deal will imbibe a portion of his own simplicity of conduct. Corrupt as the human heart unques-

tionably is, there yet remains in it a yearning for what is better. The impress of divinity is greatly dimmed, but is not altogether lost; and hence the spirit of the world, when brought into collision with principles of a higher and nobler stamp, not unusually derives some taste of their character. Dishonesty, unless of a very deep hue, will oftentimes yield before open and manly ingenuousness, and the coldness of a mean and narrow parsimony gain unwonted warmth from the contagious influence of frank liberality. One who truly therefore seeks to walk according to his vocation is careful to deport himself not merely as a simple and independent agent, but with reference also to the effect his conduct may produce upon others. Example is scarcely less efficacious for good than for evil; and if the crooked passages of life can be at all straightened by his own direct and undeviating course, an additional motive may be offered him, if any additional were required, for watchfulness that he order his steps aright.

The business to which the Christian Gentleman is appointed refers either to his personal affairs, or to some trust committed to him. In both cases a peculiar circumspection is requisite. Should he be led, as is probable, into dealings where money is concerned, he remembers that "the love of it is

the root of all evil¹,” and that he can safely come into contact with “the mammon of unrighteousness” only as long as he bears the Gospel precept in his heart, of making thereby unto himself “friends.” A friendship indeed with riches in its too ordinary sense ;—a worshipping of the idol to which the world bows the knee ;—a transference of the tenure from stewardship to possession ;—from all this the Christian’s spirit shrinks, as he feels that allegiance cannot be divided between two masters. He has made his choice,—his firm, his deliberate choice,—and the mouth of his blessed Saviour has declared, that “from him who hath chosen that good part, it shall not be taken away².”

The friendship therefore that he seeks with the unrighteous mammon arises from its just application. If that with which he hath to deal belongs to another, he is scrupulously faithful in the administration ; and in every just and legitimate manner strives to render to his stewardship its due efficiency. He conducts himself towards his employer as in presence of his God, with a tender and enlightened conscience ; and if he be “fervent in spirit,” in reference to the One, he is “not slothful in business³,” as relates to the other. He may not be at liberty to open his hand so freely,

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 10.

² Luke x. 42.

³ Rom. xii. 11.

nor to act with the same enlargement of heart as he would if he were engaged in matters of his own; but neither will he be a party to any rigorous exaction, nor countenance the rapacity of a covetous spirit. He endeavours to instil liberality on scriptural grounds; and if called upon to be the instrument of what he does not approve, he considers himself involved in a personal responsibility, and, though to his inconvenience or detriment, withdraws from what he cannot perform without a sacrifice of duty.

In whatever manner, therefore, he be employed, whether in a public or private capacity, he is equally diligent, vigilant, and upright; “not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as a servant of Christ;” knowing that to Him by whom his work is appointed, even to the great Master of all, he will have to render a strict and impartial account.

Chapter IV.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN AT HIS BUSINESS.

(continued.)

“ We must be diligent in the pursuit of such things as are needful for our bodies ; yet we ought not to afflict ourselves with the anguish of cares and fears, and such like passions, but quietly put the issue of our labours into God’s hands, and patiently expect what he will bless them withal.”

BISHOP PATRICK.

THE Christian Gentleman has been hitherto considered as an agent for others ; in some degree, therefore, in a dependent situation. But should his position in life be such that the management of his own affairs demands his chief attention, he has a wider field to act upon, and consequently requires a larger share of self-inspection. He endeavours to look upon his position, as it were, with an eagle-eye ; to raise himself as far as he may above the exhalations of earth, which are so apt to dim and overshadow the judgment ; and to

seek a purer atmosphere, whence he may discern things in their true proportion and colour. He asks not direction, therefore, from the course of conduct around him, which too generally partakes of the false character which the world imparts, and limits the horizon within the narrowest bounds; but he enters on his daily duties with an extended view; he embraces heaven as well as earth; since, though his scene of action be on the one, his ultimate object rests in the other. In short, his mental vision is purged, and as, like the Patriarch of old, he seeth the ladder which connects the two spheres of existence, so is he anxious that the report which is carried up on high, may be according to His will who ruleth over all. Thus the concerns of life assume to him a peculiar aspect. What may seem to others of the last importance, he regards as holding a very subordinate place: and where the multitude discern nothing, except, perhaps, "a little cloud like a man's hand," his penetrating sight can distinguish the mighty interests of eternity at stake.

But though he may thus judge of things by his own rule, and look for motives of action elsewhere than in the world, yet he does not unnecessarily set himself in opposition, nor affect an eccentricity of conduct or demeanour. To conform, where

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 44.

conformity leads to no compromise, is not unsuitable to the Christian character; for “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light¹,” and we are commanded to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove².

The Christian Gentleman, therefore, feels that he is most likely to employ his talent to the best advantage, when he acts as far as he can consistently with his profession, in outward conformity to the practice around him. I say in outward conformity, but not inward:—this is the main distinction. Selfishness in one of its multifarious shapes, or at the best, a kindness unsanctified, because not springing from a pure and holy source, is the motive that actuates the unrenewed heart of man: the benevolence of one under the influence of divine grace is referred to a totally different origin. A light is reflected in his soul, which guides him in all the duties and businesses of life. “We have learned,” says a pious and learned old writer, “to distinguish too subtilely, I doubt, in our lives and conversations *inter sacrum et profanum*, our religious approaches to God, and our worldly affairs. I know our conversation and demeanour in this world is not, nor can well be, all of a piece, and there will be several degrees of

¹ Luke xvi. 8.

² Matt. x. 16.

sanctity in the lives of the best men, as there were once in the land of Canaan ; but yet, I think, a good man should always find himself upon holy ground, and never depart so far into the affairs of this life as to be without either the call or compass of religion : he should always think, where-soever he is, that God and the blessed angels are there, with whom he should converse in a way of purity. We must not think that religion serves to paint our faces, to reform our looks, or only to inform our heads, or instruct and tune our tongues ; no, nor only to tie our hands, and make our outward man more demure, and bring our bodies and bodily actions into a better decorum ; but its main business is to purge and reform our hearts, and all the illicit actions and motions thereof¹."

Thus reformed then, and purified, the Christian enters on his duties, and carries the spirit of his profession into its ordinary offices. In his dealings with men, he is generous and confiding, not weakly or improvidently, but still expecting no guile, until guile force itself upon him. He is patient, easily entreated, and not lightly provoked; giving full credit to intentions even when performances fail ; and if his wrath be from any cause called forth, he is careful so to be "angry

¹ John Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 389.

that he sin not²." He is punctual to his engagements, and scrupulously veracious; and though not forbidden a proper attention to his own interests, he is not tenacious nor inclined to dispute, but in cases of doubt will wave his claim, if circumstances at all allow of his doing so. He seeks no benefit to the prejudice of his neighbour, and will generally be disposed to go with him hand in hand, and rather to give up whatever he might have designed than pursue it to his hurt. Towards those who may be walking in the like path he feels no jealousy. He has nothing of that narrow-minded spirit which sees in every one engaged in the same pursuit with himself a rival, and is rather inclined to aid and assist, if he be able, than in any way to obstruct or impede him. Far from taking advantage of ignorance and incapacity, towards all he acts with a high and noble liberality; and if he meet with, as is possible, a contrary return, he neither changes his conduct nor seeks to retaliate. In the general management of his affairs, he unites prudence with beneficence. If riches increase, he setteth not his heart upon them, nor will he allow them to become his masters. He is anxious not to permit his desires to extend in proportion. He watches and subdues the cravings of a restless fancy, ever ready to

² Eph. iv. 6.

suggest fresh wants : and where his expenditure may be lawfully and even profitably enlarged, each taste or wish, however refined and elevated, which mainly refers to his own gratification, he restrains within prescribed limits. Indeed, he doth not so much consider his sources of personal enjoyment multiplied, as that his means of doing good are extended. This is to him the highest and purest of pleasures. He is little careful to restrict himself here : and it is only when he reckons the hungry he may feed, the naked he may clothe, the ignorant he may instruct, and the abandoned he may reclaim by a judicious distribution, that he sees true cause to bless the increase of his store, and to offer up an anxious and earnest prayer that it may be continued. But should it please God to appoint unto him differently : if his riches are making themselves wings and flying away, if in spite of his care and attention his springs of wealth seem drying up, he regards it as a trial, for so it was intended, but it is a trial under which he fainteth not, nor do his patience and composure fail. On the contrary he meets the emergency with a calm, unruffled spirit ; looks his circumstances in the face with a settled countenance ; and while he applies himself betimes to such retrenchment in his expenditure as his difficulties may require, a contraction of benevolence

is the last to which he is driven. And if all will not do, if every exertion he can make be to no purpose, if even ruin come upon himself and his family, he can yet receive the blow with unflinching confidence; “It is well: the Lord hath given and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord¹. ” It is thus that he conducts his worldly concerns, and as his walk here is in the faith and fear of the Lord, blessed will he be hereafter “where his works do follow him². ”

¹ Job i. 21.

² Rev. xiv. 13.

Chapter V.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN HIS STUDY.

“ As the rivers which flow from the sea run back again into the sea, so those faculties which are given by God must always be employed for God.”—ANON.

THE Christian Gentleman is not neglectful duly to cultivate his intellectual powers. As we are answerable to the Great Giver of all things for a fit application of whatsoever He entrusts to us, and as He entrusts nothing which has not its specific object, when we feel ourselves endowed with mental faculties, it cannot be that so rare and mysterious a gift was committed to our charge without some adequate design. The slothful servant was punished, not for losing or wasting his talent, but for omitting to put it out to interest:—he restored it as he received it, but that was not enough. The allotment to each individual may differ; to one ten, to another five, to a third

only one talent may be appointed : yet an increase is expected from each according to his original share ; for as we come into the world with seeds implanted which are to germinate and bear fruit for eternity, from every one a produce is demanded suitable to the strength and fertility of the soil.

As an abstract proposition, this will be denied by none, but some question may arise as to the application. The connexion between this world and the next, it may be said, is of such a nature, that their pursuits must be of a very opposite character ; hence it is difficult to see how any mental training here can have effect in another sphere of existence. This difficulty may be admitted, for in truth all is difficult when a finite being attempts to pry into infinity ; but this does not alter the state of the case, nor can the fact admit of a doubt. Since religion only acts through the medium of reason,—for an irrational being cannot be religious,—it is evident that the connexion between the mind, the seat of reason, and the spirit, in the compound constitution of man, must be of a most intimate kind ; and hence we can no more neglect the one with impunity than we may the other. If from any fault of our own the functions of either be impaired, we are equally responsible. Not that the intellect necessarily, or even, alas ! commonly, co-operates with the soul.

Millions will experience hereafter the fearful consequence of having wilfully misapplied the powers committed to them ; but from the mere infirmity of human nature, in this world of sin and conflict, mind and spirit are too often found in collision. It will be reserved to a future to harmonize every faculty, sublimed and purified and invigorated as they will then be by their unobstructed access to Divinity. The morbific exhalations of earth more or less affect all exposed to them ; and if we allow sleep to come over us in a pestiferous atmosphere, death must be expected to follow. In proportion, then, to the fatal influence of climate, if bodily exertion is requisite ; much more, according to the resistance he experiences, will the Christian strive to bring each constituent part into due subordination. Mind, body, and soul will be each his care ; and over each will he exercise a jealous watchfulness. If we be told that Scripture says nothing as to the necessity of cultivating the intellect, the answer is, that this follows by natural inference. Supposing there were no directions as to the preservation of our health, and the few words addressed by St. Paul to Timothy are all we find on the subject, could any one doubt as to this being a duty ? Let him, then, who would argue against the necessity of employing to the best advantage his faculties of mind under the

plea that there is no special injunction, beware lest he render himself obnoxious to the charge of burying the talent with which he was to trade.

The question, however, at last can only be raised as it relates to mental cultivation ; there can be none as to mere mental exercise. The order of nature shows the necessity of our reasoning powers being called out in the every-day conduct of life ; the only matter of enquiry can be, whether the Christian Gentleman, having, in common with others, to exercise his faculties, is not under an additional obligation to improve them according to his opportunity. To strengthen the mind without refining it would be sufficient for ordinary purposes, but can scarcely be considered enough for one who has to fill the higher stations of society. On the other hand, to refine without strengthening produces only a sickly sort of growth, unfit for the element in which we breathe. To apply, therefore, the intellect so as to unite its vigorous exercise with its due cultivation, seems obviously the part best adapted for whomsoever Providence has raised in any degree above his fellows ; and the common rules of social life, in consequence, point out a suitable education.

But is such a method of dealing with our mental faculties at variance with the Christian's vocation ? Now none will deny the transcendent excellence

of that “wisdom which cometh down from above¹,” nor for an instant dispute that the “one thing needful” is the primary object on which his thoughts should be employed; but is it necessary, is it advisable, that the words of the apostle, “I am determined to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified²,” should be taken in so strict a sense, that acquaintance with other matters be considered as discouraged? As a general rule, assuredly not; yet there are cases where this would seem to be assumed practically, and such it behoves us to approach with caution and respect. When we view a man walking so near to heaven that earth appears, as it were, dwindled to his sight; when the overwhelming, and it may be, near prospect of eternity hath deadened him to the objects and interests of time, and as his treasure is on high so are all his thoughts also; when we see a fellow-mortal thus half loosened from mortality, and looking on the bands of flesh but as shackles and hindrances to the free expansion of his struggling spirit; we cannot but regard him with veneration and love. But such an one we would say occupies no common position. He seems to stand aside from the ordinary road, and his part is perhaps best performed even with reference to others, as a beacon to their course,

¹ James i. 17.

² 1 Cor. ii. 2.

and encouragement to their hopes, than if he took a more active share in the occupations of society. This, however, can hardly be considered as the usual state of those even in whom the grace of God abounds. When the soul has been weaned from the love of the world, and is taught to set its affections on things above, it undergoes a change, a vital change; but a portion of human infirmity will yet attach to it. The earnestness with which it is now engaged is apt to occasion an unwonted stimulus, and the light which bursts in, especially if at all sudden, not unfrequently creates a degree of excitement which has a tendency, if not duly controlled, to derange the action of the spiritual system. Such is the weakness of our degenerate faculties, they cannot dwell too intently even on what is good without risk. If we fix our eyes upon the sun, the visual organ becomes affected: so does the mind, if too much engrossed by one object, lose the power of just discrimination. Unless the genuine motions of the heart be kept within due regulation, it will be difficult to discern them from the mere workings of the brain; and perhaps it is not too much to say, that the cause of true religion has scarcely suffered more from the corruption of the world, than it has from the irregular movements of sincere but mistaken zeal. Some there are who cannot,

and many more who will not, distinguish between piety as it acts on a tempered and chastened spirit, and as it operates on excited feelings, and are too happy to fix on religion itself what only results from heated enthusiasm. Much of the error that has at various times been promulgated, has arisen from a restlessness of mind produced by the fever of over-excitement : whereas had the thoughts found occasional diversion, they would probably not have wandered into bewildering by-paths. It is, therefore, not only allowable, but even to be desired, that the faculties should not be confined in their exercise within too narrow limits ; and the Christian Gentleman further feels, that in order properly to fill his station, he is called upon to enlarge his sphere of knowledge, as not only would ignorance incapacitate him for the performance of many of his social duties, but would, moreover, reflect discredit upon his profession.

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Chapter VI.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN HIS STUDY.

(Continued.)

“ Of all the creatures both in sea and land,
Only to man thou hast made known thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of thy praise.”

HERBERT.

THE last chapter referred to the benefit which the Christian Gentleman derives from intellectual cultivation; but this benefit would be more than counteracted if he were thereby deadened to objects of a higher nature. Such results however by no means follow; indeed, the contrary may be rather expected, since a wider field is thus opened, wherein his religious feelings may expatiate. Many circumstances tend to influence his liberal pursuits, and the taste is for the most part formed by contingencies, varying in almost every individual. But a healthy organization will derive wholesome nutriment even from what at first

sight appears unlikely to afford it; nor will human knowledge secularize the mind, if that knowledge be approached in the spirit of the Psalmist, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom thou hast made them all¹.” In truth, whatever be his path, one duly spiritualized cannot but trace the Artificer, the Upholder, and the Director. Does he enter into the wide and fertile regions of science?—does he scrutinize the construction of the globe we occupy, or examine into the properties of any of its productions?—can his thoughts do otherwise than revert to Him “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance²? ” Does the spangled vault above engage his attention—the planets in their orbits, the stars and their courses?—“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work³. ” Is he investigating the beautiful varieties of animated nature?—At every step he meets with Him who “sendeth the springs into the rivers, which run among the hills,” and “all beasts of the field drink thereof.”—“He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of man.”—Nay,

¹ Psalm civ. 24.

² Isaiah xl. 12.

³ Psalm xix. 1.

“The lions roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God.”

Perhaps his taste may lead him to cultivate the fine arts. These may be made to minister to far higher than intellectual gratification. Music, painting, and architecture, in their several departments, when applied to their purest and noblest purposes, are well adapted to expand and elevate the soul ; and what Herbert says of the first may be said of all :

“ If I travel in your company,
You know the way to Heaven’s door.”

To allure these “ handmaids of delight ” to their true calling, from mere instruments of worldly pleasure to the promotion of God’s glory, and the benefit of His Church, is an object congenial to the Christian Gentleman, and he will gladly avail himself of every opportunity to render his tastes and accomplishments useful in the service of Him who bestowed them.

Do the heroes and sages of antiquity engage his attention ?—Never more than when communing with ancient lore doth his spirit “ rejoice in God his Saviour.” He who was “ foolishness to the Greeks,” in all the pride of their wisdom, hath condescended in these latter days “ to reveal

* Psalm civ. 10, 11, 14, 21.

himself unto babes ;" and the humblest sitter at the feet of our spiritual Gamaliel possesses infinitely more of true knowledge than Socrates or Plato could acquire in their sublimest speculations. The records too of past times afford matter of most interesting as well as useful enquiry. But the Christian Gentleman finds an additional and grateful occupation in tracing out the finger of Omnipotence, overruling the wills of men to effect His purposes ; and ponders with awe over that fate which invariably follows national corruption and ungodliness. It is almost needless to add, that passing occurrences and the choicest literature of the day he does not neglect. Information is to him valuable in common with others, but he knows likewise how to derive from it fruit peculiarly his own. He is in possession of an alchemy which can extract from base materials the precious ore ; and in his breast is deposited a divine light, like the lamp for ever burning in an Eastern shrine, which illuminates his path and directs his steps amid the perplexing shadows of a benighted world.

What have been hitherto spoken of are of common pursuit to all who walk in the higher sphere of life, but he " who has stedfastly set his face towards Jerusalem," has objects of interest peculiar to himself, to which he directs as much

time and attention as his other avocations allow. The Holy Scriptures are to him an inexhaustible mine, which he will be constantly exploring with equal delight and improvement. A critical examination of the text, perhaps through the medium of the original languages, will give him a closer insight into the meaning of the sacred volume: and while this renders him more independent of external help, it at the same time makes him freer from the entanglement of system, into which the narrowness of human teaching is too apt to run. Not that he neglects or lightly esteems that high class of labourers in the Lord's vineyard, who have particularly devoted themselves to theological investigation. On the contrary, the writings of not a few he reckons among the choicest fruit in the great storehouse of knowledge. And, especially, will he value those whom the concurrent sanction of successive generations more directly point out to hereditary veneration. Verily, among such doth he delight him to expatiate, as communing with the shadows of the mighty departed, that invisible portion of Christ's Church, which, true and faithful witnesses, have left their works behind them, and are now at rest. To the early Fathers he turns as nearest to, and most conversant with the Apostolic age: at the same time that he is more anxious on points of interest and

importance to arrive at their consentient voice, than to follow the divergements of individual opinion. But it is to our own native doctors that he chiefly directs himself—men of vast intellectual strength and stature—men of stedfast faith, and undaunted resolution, profound in all learning, holy in their lives, singleminded in their profession, confessors and martyrs in times of blasphemy and rebuke, and the honoured instruments of cleansing our Church from corrupt superstition on the one hand, and defending her from the assaults of destructive fanaticism on the other; it is with such, in his hours of studious retirement, that the Christian Gentleman finds his especial pleasure, enriching his mind, and strengthening his spirit. And privileged is that land in no common degree, which can reckon not only among the chief ornaments of her literature, but as foremost defenders of her national faith, the names of Andrewes and of Hooker, of Taylor and Hall, of Barrow and Bull, with many more of scarce inferior eminence; and happy will she be to her latest generation, if while the Bible is in the hands of all, her ministers shall continue to teach as these have taught, to walk as they have walked, prepared to defend, through every extremity, the truth thus expounded, thus preserved, thus delivered!

The man of education and leisure then may

roam widely, but as a Christian he will be careful and discriminating. He is an economist of time, and therefore peculiarly diligent that his precious hours be not misemployed. The frivolities which load the tables of the idle, so distinctive a mark of the present age, are little suited to his taste; novelties, merely as such, engage not his attention; nor, above all, does he ever knowingly permit his eye to fall on what may shock, or in any way disturb his better feelings. And as he would fence his own principles from unnecessary exposure, so is he equally scrupulous in guarding the principles of those who may come within his privacy. Thus he thinks it a sort of treachery to allow upon his shelves works of an evil and injurious tendency. It may not be possible indeed to banish, especially from a numerous collection, all of which he does not approve; and such is the perversity of the human mind, that erroneous opinions and false sentiments will constantly be found mixed up with what is worth preserving; but he makes it a point of conscience to prohibit all that pestilent, but, alas! too numerous, class of writers, who, by "putting light for darkness and darkness for light,"—by making vice attractive, and religion and virtue repulsive,—corrupt the hearts of the young and unwary. No wit, no

⁵ Isaiah v. 20.

prescription, no general applause, will procure his sufferance of those whom he is conscious the Almighty Censor would indignantly condemn. Indeed, the library of the Christian Gentleman is a sort of consecrated bound, where, though all may not wear an equally religious aspect, yet innocence may walk secure from injury, and the purest delicacy without risk of offence. Awful is the responsibility, tremendous will be the doom, of those who have abused the talents committed to them, to pampering the appetites, stimulating the passions, undermining the morals, or shaking the faith of their fellows. Who can limit the evil which an able and seductive writer may convey perhaps to the latest generations? Surely his final sentence will be fearfully aggravated by the curses of those whom he has helped to corrupt, unceasingly echoing through a long eternity!

A judicious selection then from the works of the good, the learned, and the wise, is a valuable heir-loom to successive generations; and if any shall be able to say to whose provident care they are indebted for benefit they have gained, or evil avoided, may not the voice thereof ascend and gladden his spirit even beyond the sphere of mortal intelligence?

Chapter VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN SOCIETY.

(Continued.)

“ The Christian profession chargeth us to be quiet and orderly in our station ; diligent in our callings ; veracious in our words ; upright in our dealings ; observant to our relations ; obedient and respectful toward our superiors ; meek and gentle to our inferiors ; modest and lowly ; ingenuous and compliant in our conversation ; candid and benign in our censures ; innocent and inoffensive, yea, courteous and obliging, in all our behaviour towards all persons.”—BARROW.

THOUGH the Christian’s chief intimacy is within his own breast ; though he hath thoughts and communings, hopes and fears, with which “the stranger intermeddleth not¹;” and though, like a miser, it is in solitude that he rejoices to contemplate the treasured “riches of Christ”² which are in his possession, yet he enters freely into society, and never allows to himself the mischievous delu-

¹ Prov. x. 14.

² Ephes. iii. 3.

sion that his vocation is a barrier to kind and neighbourly intercourse. That he is called upon to take his share in the active concerns of life has already been dwelt upon at large; and assuredly he looks upon religion darkly, when he thinks that it casts a chill upon those social feelings which are implanted within us for the wisest and best of purposes. If standing apart from the frequented path, he have no smile of recognition, nor word of friendship and sympathy for those who are moving along, he observes not, in this respect, his gracious Master's example, who not only would conduct to the happiness of a future life, but is the softener, the soother, the sweet companion of this. Christianity, we are told, is intended to leaven the whole mass:—human means are to be employed:—but if those who by divine grace are best qualified to assist in the mixing keep aloof from the work, religion must be deprived of its most obvious agency. It is true the Apostle warns that “friendship with the world is enmity towards God¹. ” And again: “Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness²? ” To avoid

¹ James iv. 4.

² 2 Cor. vi. 14.

contamination is an unquestioned duty, and to conflict with worldly principles, worldly maxims and opinions, is no small part of our daily warfare ; but it can scarcely be consistent with that charity that “ hopeth all things, and believeth all things¹,” to consider society at large as under a ban, and that a charter of communion must only be granted with a select and privileged few. I say not but what the Christian associates in preference with those whose sentiments accord with his own. It is in a congenial atmosphere that the soul expands, and his chief companionship is sought among those whose eyes are directed to the same object as his own. But it is a narrow exclusiveness, a Pharisaic stiffness of deportment, which seems to say to his neighbour, “ I am holier than thou,” that he deems unbecoming in the servant of One who was “ meek and lowly of heart². ” He must, indeed, be dead to the world, inasmuch as his chief enjoyments lie not within it :—his thoughts are to be mainly fixed on his journey’s end ;—yet even as a mere sojourner he partakes in the interests of those among whom his lot is cast, and is anxious to contribute as he best can to their welfare and happiness. The busy scenes of life may for the most part but little suit him ;

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

² Matt. xi. 29.

and its rivalries and collisions, its turmoils and strife, be altogether repugnant to his tone of mind: yet if in any degree he can allay the heat of contention ; can give a higher and better character to the principles of action ; if he can reconcile enmities or remove prejudices, he shrinks not from the duty, however irksome and unsatisfactory. A soldier cannot always choose his post : if his orders are distinct he hesitates not to obey them. There is, however, a season to all. It is graceful for one who has borne the heat and burden of the day, when his evening arrives and age advances, to withdraw himself then from the haunts of men, and in the leisure of contemplation to await his summons ; but until the weight of years approaches, the conduct of the Christian Gentleman will in general be, neither on the one hand assiduously to court society, nor on the other reservedly to shun it. It is necessary, however, that he use due prudence and circumspection. He pretends not to a rigid severity of judgment ; yet too many there are moving in the circle of the world around, who are admitted on terms of ordinary intercourse, but in whose company he would not willingly be found. No wit, nor learning, nor conversational talents, would induce him to countenance any whose walk is at all marked by

opprobrium or scandal. From such he feels himself called upon to separate—communion here would compromise his own character; and should this occur from inadvertence or accident, a respectful but distant civility will show it was not desired.

It has been said, that a consistent religious profession is no bar to social intercourse. On the contrary, it acts beneficially, not only as affording healthy recreation, but as tending to correct a crudity of thought, and the viewing of things through a fanciful medium, which abstraction is apt to produce. But care must be taken against running into an opposite extreme. Not a few there are in the world who frequent its circles apparently from mere vacuity of mind, as if the main object of their life were to escape from themselves. Besides the loss of time thus miserably squandered, a craving is caused by over-excitement, which by constantly seeking further stimulant, eventually leads to a weakening of the powers, and we are sure the Adversary will not fail to profit by the advantage thus afforded him.

It is not however merely in avoiding scenes of idle concourse, and dissipation, which of course can be little congenial to his taste, that the Christian's caution is shown,—but in amusements

not in themselves unsuitable or hurtful, he will not indulge beyond the strictest bound of moderation. If recreation have any chance of becoming occupation, if it do more than engage a subordinate place, if it have at all a tendency to engross his time or thoughts, and to bear above a very limited part in his expenditure ; he will abandon it altogether, sooner than allow the smallest risk to be incurred of an unfaithful stewardship. To lose a portion of his reward for a passing gratification is what he can never consent to ; nor will he permit himself to approach the verge of what may be allowable, lest perhaps he hold out a false light, and be the means of leading the careless and unthinking to stray beyond.

While the Christian Gentleman desires as he walks before God, so also to walk before men, he at the same time has recourse to no unnecessary peculiarity, but in mixing with them according to their several positions, follows the customary rules of social life, with the distinction, that whereas others regulate their deportment merely by an external conventional standard, his is founded on the inward dictates of his heart ; for his profession makes him essentially courteous, not because it is the general practice, but because he obeys what his principles inspire. Thus he takes plea-

sure in diffusing a tempered cheerfulness around, and communicating freely from his own store while he equally draws upon that of others, not only does he indulge in an innocent gratification, but moreover promotes kind and friendly feelings. But never does he allow this liberty to run the hazard of abuse;—the least approach towards licence he carefully guards. Any levity of expression, or laxity of sentiment, he immediately discourages by mild but earnest rebuke, if circumstances allow; if not, by a sudden and marked silence, and turning the subject-matter of discourse into another channel. Indeed, he is always desirous that his speech should carry a savour of that sweet and holy source whence a good man's words are drawn; and though he prudently judges of times and seasons, yet since he bears the banner of the Cross, he is at all times ready to stand forth to its honour and defence. In short, he is ever at His Master's work, endeavouring, as far as in him lies, to “adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things¹;” and if the result be that in the eye of some that doctrine appear in a more favourable light; if prejudice be softened, and the partition-wall at all shaken which pride or ignorance had raised; if Providence make

¹ Titus ii. 20.

him in any degree the instrument of preparing the soil for the reception of the divine seed; surely it will add to his crown of rejoicing in that day when the books shall be opened, should any one who is brought by God's mercy within the fold, be able to refer it to his example, that "he was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found¹."

¹ Luke xv. 32.

Chapter VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN HIS FAMILY.

“Thou, Lord, by enjoining me to love my neighbour as myself, hast intimated my duty of loving those best which either in blood are nearest my natural self, or in grace nearest my Christian self.”
—BISHOP KEN.

THE earliest ties acknowledged by mankind were those of family. The original state was patriarchal, and though this may not be consistent with the more advanced and complicated shape which society has since assumed, still a peculiar bond of union between those of the same stock seems rivetted about our nature by a kind and merciful Providence, who hath implanted in our breasts those sympathies and affections which are the sweetest of earthly comforts along the troubled paths of life. Some writers, indeed, of the last age, in their refined philanthropy, held that such limitations arose from illiberal prejudice;

but however frigid selfishness might endeavour to impose upon the world the face of enlightened benevolence, the common feelings of humanity have always spoken out; and when the Apostle enjoins a special care for our own¹, he uses a language which has been familiar through all generations. The Christian Gentleman regards these ties with sacred veneration. Within the domestic circle he more freely expatiates. He considers it a peculiar blessing that he stands not alone, but that there are those about him with whom he partakes in a community of interests and objects; and that in yielding to the most delightful of sensations, the full outpouring of the heart, not only is he beheld complacently by the Author of all Love, but is moreover keeping his affections alive for that wider sphere, where they will be called into a more unlimited exercise, in the blessed communion of Saints above. Nor is he for straitening the bonds of affinity. The claims of kindred he allows in their full strength and validity: and if his position permit him to administer towards their welfare or protection, he does it with an ungrudging and frank cordiality. But as the cords are drawn closer, the ties of blood become of a peculiarly endearing character. Brotherly love is the Scriptural term for affection of

¹ 1 Timothy v. 8.

the most intimate description, and when called upon to live in unity and concord we are exhorted “to dwell together as brethren¹,” as members of the one body of which Christ is the head. The friendships of the Christian are enduring and firm, but the attachments formed from the cradle by identity of parentage are those to which he is ever most keenly alive: and though circumstances may divide, lands and seas intervene, they keep their hold as tenaciously as life itself. And hard indeed must that nature be, whose sympathies fraternity doth not actively call forth. The earliest scenes looked upon were the same—the same voices first spoke in tender accents to the ear—the pleasures and the little troubles of childhood—the hopes, the fears, of advancing years, all were felt in common:—and if the hearth be now cold,—the father gone to his rest,—the mother’s place be no more found,—the memory of those so venerated and beloved yet remains as a centre round which their common affections rally; their graves the spot where pious tears still flow together. And how assiduous is the care—how strong though gentle the influence—how healing and refreshing the balm of fraternal love! Many a youth hath wandered astray and might have been lost for ever, whom a sister’s tenderness re-

¹ Psalm cxxxiii. 1.

called from the road that leadeth to destruction, and awed, and won, and brought back to the paths of pleasantness and peace. Where does a sister's weakness lean more confidently, or hang more fondly, than on him whom from infancy she hath looked upon as her friend, her guide, and her adviser? And when the storm beats most heavily, and the billows swell most fearfully, what hand hath been oftener stretched than a brother's to a brother, and led more securely to a haven of safety and of rest? Truly doth the Christian Gentleman ponder over these things, and thank the mercy which hath not sent him into this world alone.

But the providence of God is pleased to build the social edifice upon a yet more mysterious and holy foundation, for out of the substance of man was woman made. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh¹." The manner in which this union is observed has been in all ages a test of civilization and morality. It is no where but in a state of the extremest barbarism, and not always there, that the marriage bond does not exist; and only in the most advanced stages of corruption has it been profaned and set at nought. Indeed, since it "signifies unto us the mystical union that is

¹ Gen. ii. 24; Ephes. v. 31.

betwixt God and his Church¹,” and since the backsliding and idolatry of God’s chosen people are throughout Scripture spoken of as violations of it, with what an awful sacredness must this tie be invested in the eyes of him, who in the types and shadows of earthly affinities substantiates to himself the realities of heaven. Right pleasant is it to the contemplative spirit to seize the chain that connects the two states of existence, and ascending by it, press as it were within the confines of the invisible world. But how specially exalted and vivid the delight when this is effected through the medium of our best and dearest affections ! If Christ, who is the head of the Church, gave up His life, and still watcheth, and guideth, and pleadeth for her ; and though grieved by her perversenesses and turning aside, if yet His loving-kindness faileth not—how should man who is the head of the woman support and cherish her ; bear gently with her when need requires ; while their mutual infirmities draw tighter the bond from a feeling sense of their common humanity. To those who thus regard the nuptial engagement, it does indeed appear as a high and holy mystery ! But this can only be when viewed with a spiritualized eye, and approached with religious awe and reverence. If inferior motives are allowed to

¹ Marriage Service.

prevail—if inordinate affection, or any other unworthy reason cause “the one thing needful” to be overlooked—if it be forgotten that those who are joined together as one flesh, are to walk before God as one spirit—and if the divine guidance be not sought sincerely and earnestly while the choice is yet forming; the state is entered into unblest, unsanctified; and though such union may be productive of much earthly felicity, still its deepest source of enjoyment is wanting, the eye of approving Heaven upon two souls advancing together towards eternity. “The happiness of the conjugal state,” says an eloquent writer, “appears heightened to the highest degree it is capable of when we see two persons of accomplished minds, not only united in the same interests and affections, but in their taste of the same improvements and diversions¹.” No doubt an union of interests and affections is indispensable to the happiness of married life, and an identity of tastes greatly heightens its pleasures, but it is indeed capable of far nobler enjoyment. When those who have pledged their faith at the altar “hand in hand pass on²” in the daily performance of religious duties, and at stated hours together “lowly they bow, adoring;” truly do they taste of that “per-

¹ Spectator, No. 525, attributed to Hughes.

² Paradise Lost, Book IV.

petual fountain of domestic sweets" in heartfelt gratitude towards Him who hath so bountifully unlocked it to them.

The Christian Gentleman then regards the wife of his bosom, not only as a sharer in the joys and cares of this world, but as one with whom he participates in the hopes and expectations of the next. "That they should walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless¹" is his great, his prevailing object. It is not enough that their affection be without a shade, and that their feelings accord in all the passing concerns of life; his desire is that they should be attuned to a sublimer strain; that their hearts be poured forth in the unison of a higher harmony. In spiritual communing, therefore, is their chief delight; in mutual encouragement or in gentle admonition; in solving difficulties or expanding truths; in forming plans for edification or beneficence; in telling over the blessings they so abundantly enjoy; and above all, in the fervent uttering of prayer and praise. And while, though with meek and humble submission, they beseech a continuance of this their earthly joy, and earnestly implore the choicest graces for each other, may we not believe that their common voice is heard with peculiar complacency on high? Will this

¹ Luke i. 7.

unity be continued in the regions of eternity, “ where there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but they will even be as angels in heaven¹? ” It is not for man to lift the veil which envelopes scenes too transcendental for mortal faculties to penetrate ; but if recognition be admitted in the communion of saints above, is it not rather to be expected that a tie so mysterious, so indissoluble, here, will be refined into something suited to our exalted condition, than that it will be utterly done away ? If the Christian is called to the bitter trial of closing the eyes of one to whom he has been joined on earth, he may do so in confident hope that when his days too are accomplished, an union still more perfect, yet holier affection, awaits him in a state of unmixed felicity. But may not a strong and tender attachment exist even when tastes, feelings, and ideas, do not intimately accord ? Undoubtedly thus it often is ; and by due use of prudential cautions, by mutual forbearance and indulgence, such discrepancies may concur with domestic happiness. To a husband, however, and wife who are indeed united on Christian grounds, and in Christian sentiments, a centre of convergence is provided more than sufficient to counteract other points of non-agreement. In characters under such blessed influence,

¹ Luke xx. 35.

an assimilation on inferior matters will probably take place by degrees ; or if such differences do still remain, they will be like lights and shades in a picture, relieving one another, or as the different parts in a concert, which symphonize towards the general harmony. Those who are thus mysteriously bound together ; who look up to Heaven through the same medium ; whose knees habitually bend, and tongues join in the same offices of private and public devotion, will for the most part find their feelings and sentiments mutually reflected back or anticipated. Blessed then is that pair thus united in the Lord, who, like the holy and venerable parents of the Baptist, are found waiting and serving in the courts of His house. Verily their “eyes shall see his salvation¹ ;” “their spirits shall rejoice in God their Saviour².”

¹ Luke ii. 30.

² Luke i. 47.

Chapter IX.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN HIS FAMILY.

(Continued.)

“Infants’ manners are moulded more by the example of parents, than by stars at their nativities.”—HERBERT.

THE conduct of the Christian Gentleman in some of the domestic relations has been noticed in the preceding chapter, but there is one yet more comprehensive and responsible, namely, that of a parent. And here, too, by a merciful arrangement of Providence, duty and affection go hand in hand. The claim of paternity is implanted as a law of nature in the heart, and few there are, however hardened, who are callous to it. When, therefore, he is first saluted as a father, he rejoices with a joy that is common to humanity: but he has yet a far deeper and holier sentiment. As he enfolds the unconscious infant in his arms, a sluice is opened to new and powerful emotions; but it

is not simply as an object of his love,—for whose worldly welfare he is to provide,—or as an inheritor of his name, his fortunes, and his station;—a mysterious charge is committed to his trust, whose interests are not limited within the bounds of time; a spirit hath been brought into being which will never die; an existence is commenced which is to last for ever. Fervent and constant then are his prayers, that the eyes now opened may rejoice evermore in the light; that the consciousness now awakened may be to a happiness, when heaven and earth shall pass away, still uninterrupted and enduring. And never more strongly doth he thus feel than when he presents his child at the font. This is indeed a holy consecration, and with holy preparation of soul doth he appear. He regards not Baptism as a mere admission within the bounds of the visible Church, an entering into the privileges of a Christian community only, but he believes it to be, as Scripture testifies, the divinely appointed method whereby original sin is washed away, and a new and spiritual life implanted in the soul; that the infant brought to the laver of regeneration is therein made “a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven¹. ” But in proportion as the privilege is

¹ Church Catechism.

great, and the object all-important, the obstructions are numerous and the future path is difficult. The infection of sin remains even in them that are regenerate, and such is “the fault and corruption of man’s nature²” that it shows itself in the first workings of the will. It must, therefore, be taken betimes, at the earliest appearance of vitality in the root, the very first symptom of springing in the bud. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it³. ” By assiduous watching of the peculiar tendencies of his disposition; by scrutinizing the secret action of his heart, ere yet the ingenuousness of youth hath learnt disguise, and by an orderly though not too formal system of discipline, does the Christian seek to guide his son aright; and when he adverts to the admonition of the wise king, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be ornaments of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck⁴;” he remembers that precept without example is nothing, and that he must be careful of all his own words and actions if he desire to preserve his authority unimpaired, or to make that authority a blessing to his offspring. But obedience is the foundation on which alone he can securely build.

² Article IX.

³ Prov. xxii. 6.

⁴ Prov. i. 8—9.

Should he stop to parley; should he think it advisable to account for what he inculcates, or profess to explain every thing to his child's reason, not only does he make that child his judge, thereby placing both in a false position, but he interferes with and mars the scheme of Providence. If the trustful simplicity of young faith be shaken or disturbed, a self-willed and independent temper is engendered, which may not improbably mature into the hard and calculating scepticism to which the proud heart of man so naturally inclines; whereas when the habit of implicit reliance has been settled in childhood, it becomes safe and easy to call the judgment into exercise; and a wise and prudent father will be as cautious in riper years of requiring a blind submission to his injunctions as in earlier days he had been of assigning his reasons. "When you feel such affection for your children," says the amiable Melancthon, "think that God has impressed this upon us as an image of His own mind towards us."⁵ The Christian parent then is rationally indulgent, since any approach to severity is apt to deaden the feelings; he is careful not to "⁶provoke his child to anger lest he be discouraged;" but at the same time he is firm even in what may

⁵ Melancthon's Epistles.

⁶ Col. iii. 21.

appear trifles, and shrinks not from correction when necessary. But his chastisements are in general rather in the shape of temporary privation connected with the higher sources of enjoyment, than in that of direct infliction ; and he will be careful to show, that though there be cause for anger, sorrow at the offence is his prevailing sentiment ; for the character of youth is best formed by a judicious mixture of firmness and tenderness in the dealing with it. If the one degenerate into asperity, or the other into weakness, material injury must result, though hardly in an equal degree, since of all the evils to which we are exposed from others, of none perhaps is the effect more permanently felt than that of what is emphatically called “ being spoilt ” in our early years.

But it is necessary to begin on a right principle : to bring up his children, therefore, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord¹, is the Christian’s primary care. The rudiments indeed of religion are taught in infancy, and happy is it when the first words of divine knowledge are imbibed from the lips of a mother ! Surely they fall like the dew of Hermon fertilizing a grateful soil ! To the father it belongs to expand this knowledge, and to lead on his son step by step in the approved

¹ Eph. vi. 4.

ways of the Church. He grounds his instruction upon baptismal privilege, not that the belief of what has been done may lull the soul into security, as if one baptized were permanently safe (an error into which some have fallen); but viewing it as the spring and source of spiritual life, which must be nourished and nurtured by the constant use of appointed means. Hence he brings his child early to the public services, to the "hearing of sermons," of which he directs to the comprehension, teaching him to be a learner, not a judge, and in due time he presents him to the Bishop, for the sacred rite of confirmation, and, as consequent upon that, to the full privileges of a member of the Church—a participation in the holy Eucharist. A good foundation being thus laid, the principles are to be strengthened and the judgment guided to fit them to act on the great theatre of the world. He points out, accordingly, the various corruptions that have defaced, and the fallacies that have assumed the appearance of truth, more especially as they bear on the present times; and thus doth he fortify and prepare his son for the great conflict of opinions in which he will have to take a decided part.

Though religious instruction is the first object, the Christian Gentleman is aware that his parental charge extends far beyond. His son is to be

prepared to fill his allotted station, and has consequently a right to as complete an education, with a view to that station, as circumstances will permit. The ancients thought, and they were wise in their generation, that as the state laid a claim to the entire service of her members, it was not beyond her care to enforce a system of exercises by which their symmetry and strength of frame might be perfected ; and since we know how much the body influences the highest functions both of mind and spirit—the Apostle even calling it “ the temple of the Holy Ghost”—it would be difficult to give a reason why less attention should be paid now than formerly to the healthy developement of its powers and energies. In truth, one who looks to the forming of the whole man takes this into account, and will be anxious, as far as on him depends, to render the casket, though of frail and perishable substance, not unworthy of the immortal gem it contains. This however is but of secondary concern : to cultivate and improve the youthful mind is the object to which the Christian Gentleman mainly directs himself. Considering justly that whatever he may have acquired, not less of knowledge than of worldly possessions, was not meant merely for selfish gratification, but should be chiefly employed for hereditary transmission ; to communicate to his son from his store

of observation and experience, to make up in him his own deficiencies, to correct the taste, to inform the judgment, and point out the sources he may safely investigate; to render, in a word, more plain and easy by preparation and instruction, the rough and intricate paths which must be followed, especially when commencing the journey of life, will be the dearest and most delightful task in which parental solicitude can be engaged.

But the father can himself usually do only a part, and a small part, of what is essential. With careful discrimination, and after anxious inquiry, therefore, he makes over his child to those more immediately employed in the arduous duties of education. In such he puts a generous but not blind confidence, while at the same time he bears in mind, that no delegation of authority can free him from the responsibility belonging to the paternal office, nor can dependence on others in any degree supply the place of his own discerning and vigilant superintendence. The hours of recreation too should not be thought beyond the reach of a prudent parent's eye. The training to good or evil is still going on, and if the child be allowed from inattention or false indulgence to have recourse to stimulating amusements, instead of such as present themselves naturally to his age, a craving for excitement will be created, of which

he will feel the ill effects through life. Assuredly that man spends his time most happily, who finds interest and enjoyment where palled satiety passes heedlessly by ; and he who hath been brought up to weigh the objects presented to him by a true and faithful measure, will owe through future years a debt of gratitude to that care which early diverted him from a path, by which so many are led to spend their days in profitless, too often even perilous pursuit.

From a childhood and youth thus watched and directed the happiest results may be expected. As life advances, distinctions lessen, and the paternal and filial relations settle into a tender and unreserved friendship. And beautiful is the scene which Providence oftentimes permits to brighten the Christian parent's decline. With interests and objects of affection identified, confidence on one side is met with respectful delicacy on the other ; and as the arm of manhood supports the weakness of age, the words of hoary wisdom are caught with pious reverence, and are treasured as a dear and precious legacy. Nor are the tears that are shed when death closes the scene evanescent and soon forgotten. Though departed in presence he yet remains, his memory is not buried in the grave, but flourishes, like the bay tree, while other things fade away ; for a tablet is

engraven within the son's breast of tender remembrance, which time will not efface.

The Christian Gentleman is moreover careful to observe a consistent behaviour towards those dependent on him. Though strict in enforcing regularity and order, and passing by no deviation from good conduct, yet there is a mildness and consideration in his deportment towards his servants, which makes them feel that he never finds fault needlessly, nor then in an intemperate or harsh tone. As far as circumstances allow he would have them look on him as a friend, and takes a willing and active interest in their concerns. Above all, he is anxious for their spiritual welfare ; and by instructing the ignorant, admonishing the careless, encouraging the timid, and enlivening the lukewarm, he strives to build up his household unto Christian edification. No domestic employment does he ever permit to interfere with their regular attendance at the house of God ; and when at morn and even he assembles his family for social worship and hearing the divine word, he doubts not that a blessing attends him, since “ where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them¹.”

¹ Matt. xviii. 20.

But are there not frequent instances, whether among children or dependents, of disorder, ingratitude, and ill-conduct, though every care may have been taken with them? No doubt such cases do occur, and are among the severest troubles and trials of life. The faithful pilgrim looks for no immunity from disappointments, which oftentimes assail him where they are most felt, and from quarters whence they might be least expected: but surely the evil would be much aggravated, if he could attribute it in any degree to his own example or neglect. He may grieve, but it will be on the account of others, not from the pangs of self-accusation. It is enough for him to have acted as he judged right: the rest is beyond his control.

After all, however, a more corresponding result may for the most part be hoped for, since Providence usually vouchsafes to bless the efforts of those who faithfully serve Him, and “to have mercy upon thousands in them that love him, and keep his commandments¹. ” The blessed anticipation of a future meeting in Heaven with those whom he may have been instrumental in bringing there, will be to the Christian an abundant compensation for every anxiety which watchfulness and care for the well-doing of his

¹ Exod. xx. 5.

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own may have caused him. Then, indeed, if not before, “shalt thou eat the labours of thine hands: O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.”

¹ Psalm cxxviii. 2.

Chapter 7.

THE POLITICS OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN,

“ The wisdom and goodness of God, that shines in the natural order and dependence of things on one another, in the frame of the great world, appears likewise, and commends itself to us, in the civil order he has instituted in the societies of men, the lesser world.”—**ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.**

THE Christian Gentleman occupies an important position in the commonwealth. Devotedly attached to his country, he considers it a duty as obvious as binding to promote the public welfare to the utmost of his power. To obtain, therefore, a clear and settled view as to how this object may be best accomplished, is a matter with him of no slight moment. Since opinions, and even principles, are for the most part formed before the judgment has attained maturity, they are derived either from the instruction or imitation of others,

or from something congenial in our natural disposition. Hence the importance of early precept and example towards rightly directing the peculiar biases of the mind. But if these impressions are taken on credit at first, as experience advances and the intellect gains strength, they must be brought to the bar and undergo close examination ; otherwise we continue through life in mental nonage, with prejudice for our guide instead of reason. This is particularly the case as regards our political sentiments. Born in a country where the conduct of the State is not merely a subject of free and constant discussion, but seems to intrude itself into the every-day business of life, our feelings, and indeed passions, become early enlisted : and when we consider how absorbing is the spirit of party ;—how it tends systematically to conceal or pervert truth ;—the false guise with which it invests its own views, and misrepresents those of others ;—how uncertain a test is public opinion, and how difficult to ascertain even were it a safe rule ;—it is evident with what caution the mind must be prepared to form its own judgment and take its own course. Not a few continue, as it were, children for life, from having been forced into immature precocity : hence principles must be nourished into consistency and strength before they are brought into active use. In order to this

our established polity must be studied, both historically as to its origin, its changes, and gradual consolidation, and practically in reference to the existing state of things. For as it is the shallowest empiricism to overlook or underrate the past, under the plea of our advancement in knowledge and wisdom, so does it hold of a narrow bigotry to consider our ancestors as unerring authorities for the times in which we live. He who seeks, then, to settle his political faith by an enlightened and Christian standard, finds true wisdom to lie between extreme opinions ; and, while he considers a reckless craving for change as among the most dangerous signs of the times, he knows how fruitless it is to look for fixity in any of the affairs of a fleeting and mutable world. Thus though his principles are fixed, for instability there is not consistent with his general character, and in main points his line of conduct is fixed too ; yet contingencies will occur amid the changes and chances to which the public machine is especially liable, which he endeavours to estimate with candour and judgment, and thence to act with discretion and prudence. He strives to be firm without tenacity ; and as he makes a conscience of all he says or does, he stands on a far higher and more certain ground than those who are influenced by mere worldly expediency.

The British Constitution, then, he regards with profoundest veneration ; and, since the hand of man might pull down but could never restore, he watches over the attacks made upon it with an anxious and jealous eye. As security depends upon preserving its equipoise, he closely examines on which side the scale preponderates, and hesitates not a moment in throwing his weight into the other. Though he may feel strongly, he never loses sight of moderation, and as studiously avoids any indication of party violence as he does a tendency towards wavering laxity. Not that he thinks it necessary to keep his sentiments to himself. He justly despises the cant of the day against the exercise of legitimate influence. Settled in his own mind as to what is right, he strives to inculcate the same upon others, pointing it out in the light in which he himself regards it, namely, that of Christian duty. He desires to raise them above low and personal considerations, and to awaken those conscientious convictions by which his own course is directed. If God places him in a station to which some look up, shall he neglect the charge attached to that station ? If his country has a claim to his share in her defence, shall he fail to exert his influence to the best of his power ? Truly men's judgment is to him a little matter : his rule of conduct is within ; and as

he hears the voice of God which speaks to his conscience, he pursues his way unswervingly, firm and stedfast to the end.

Loyalty is, moreover, not less an animating motive in the heart, than a leading principle in the conduct of the Christian Gentleman. From general obedience to the laws, the word is now by prescriptive usage confined to faithful service towards the sovereign. And truly is this service tendered in a free and generous spirit, when it originates from such a source. A fretting resistance to control, and impatience of superiors, springs naturally in proud and selfish man; but, when softened by divine grace, he delighteth to recognize in earthly rulers the types and representatives of the Majesty on high. Since "the powers that be are of God," the submission that he pays to them is an earnest of the submission he pays to his Maker: for as "Fear God and honour the king" are conjoint instructions in Holy Writ, he knows he cannot duly obey the one, without at the same time observing the other. The monarch, then, he regards with habitual deference and respect, and to uphold the lawful authority and dignity of the crown, he considers not more a duty than a high social privilege. Should it indeed unfortunately occur that the evil dispositions of the Prince so far predominate, as of

necessity to prevent esteem and attachment to his person, the loyal subject does not withdraw his respect, though he transfers it from the individual to the office ; and will rather desire to throw a veil over the vices and follies he deplores, than encourage by his example the blazoning them abroad to public observation and comment. But when a merciful Providence presents the nation with a head, in whom, to the dignity of the kingly station, the virtues and graces which adorn private life are superadded ; when no eye is offended, nor ear hurt by resting on the royal character and conduct ; but an example is rather set in the exercise of the domestic charities, which may be looked at and profitably followed by all ; then indeed doth the Christian patriot raise his voice to Heaven, that such a reign may be long and prosperous, and the line preserved through successive generations ; that the throne may be surrounded by wise and godly counsellors, and propped by the affections of a loyal and faithful people. And heartily doth he respond to that beautiful supplication appointed by the Church for the anniversary of the accession ; “ Let thy wisdom be *her* guide, and let thine arm strengthen *her* ; let justice, truth, and holiness, let peace and love, and all those virtues that adorn the Christian profession, flourish in *her* days ; direct all *her* counsels

and endeavours to thy glory and the welfare of *her* people; and give us grace to obey her cheerfully and willingly for conscience sake; that neither our sinful passions nor our private interests may disappoint *her* cares for the public good; let *her* always possess the hearts of *her* people, that they may never be wanting in honour to *her* person and dutiful submission to *her* authority; let *her* reign be long and prosperous, and crown *her* with immortality in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Chapter XII.

THE POLITICS OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

(Continued.)

“The true Statesman is inviolably constant to his principles of virtue and religious prudence ; his ends are noble, and the means he uses innocent ; he hath a single eye on the public good : and if the ship of the state miscarry, he had rather perish in the wreck than preserve himself upon the plank of an inglorious subterfuge. His worth hath led him to the helm ; the rudder he uses is an honest and vigorous wisdom ; the star he looks to for direction is in heaven ; and the port he aims at is the joint welfare of prince and people.”—ARCHBISHOP SANCROFT.

THE Christian Gentleman has been thus far regarded as a politician in his private capacity, but circumstances may call him forth into a wider sphere of action. He may be summoned to a post of responsibility and trust in the State ; and if this be without anxious seeking on his part, a testimony to his abilities and high qualifications, he considers the public voice thus declared as the voice

of God, to which he is not free to turn a deaf ear. His talents are at the disposal of Him who bestowed them; and when he has arrived at the settled conviction that to assist in the government of his country is the service marked out for him, he sets himself to the charge with firm reliance on that promise, that in the performance of duty, be it what it may, undertaken in the fear and for the honour of God, “as thy days so shall thy strength be¹.”

However tangled, then, is the skein he has to unravel, and contending the interests he has to reconcile or balance, he does not despond, for his dependence is beyond himself. He looks to Omnipotence as his guide, to Omnipotence for power, and buckling the Christian panoply more closely round him, he enters on the conflict, however arduous and harassing, with a firm heart and unflinching eye. Nor is he over-anxious as to the result. As his post was not acquired by underhand intrigue, and he is unaffected by a low and selfish ambition, he is ready to surrender the trust when it can no longer be held with honour to himself and advantage to the country. In his estimate of men he draws a medium between an unauthorized and anti-scriptural idea of perfectibility, the frequent chimera of visionary minds,

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 25.

and the yet more pernicious and degrading one, of inveterate corruption. As conscience is his own rule, he allows it to be so to others, and meets scruples and difficulties with candour and delicacy. While he enters on nothing without earnest seeking of divine aid, he neglects not to bring into diligent use every practice of foresight and sagacity. He makes to himself a law of the leading principles of his conduct, from which he cannot be induced in the slightest degree to swerve; but in matters of minor importance he is not tenacious, but willingly meets the opinions of others for the general welfare. In his usual deportment he is kind, considerate, and courteous; and while he deems it dishonesty to hold out hopes which he expects not to realize, he is careful to be guided by regard to merit and the public service, rather than by motives of private interest or partizanship.

With respect to his general policy, the Christian Statesman will govern on sound constitutional principles. He is equally zealous in maintaining the rights of the crown and of the people, and in supporting the laws in their steady exercise is utterly regardless of obloquy and misrepresentation. He considers war as an evil, in which unnecessarily to engage is a crime of no common magnitude; yet he allows not himself to be betrayed into mean and unbecoming concessions,

which, by producing contempt, only the more provoke aggression. Nor does he allow any personal or party considerations to influence him in dealing with conflicting interests. Would men, indeed, take a higher view, and permit themselves to look beyond the immediate present, they would find the interests of the different classes in the community far nearer allied than they imagine. They would perceive that the good of one was, in truth, the good of all; and that none could be injured without general detriment. The antagonism, of which we now hear so much, between those who possess wealth and those who labour to acquire it; between the artificer, the commercialist, and the proprietor of the soil, were their mutual dependence well understood, would subside into a kindly though zealous competition which should most contribute to the general welfare by turning their several energies to the best account. But as long as narrow selfishness and shortsighted prejudice prevail, and angry passions are brought into play;—while one portion of the people is taught to believe the other acting under hostile motives;—it becomes more and more indispensable for a statesman to hold the balance with a steady hand, to stand firm against clamour whencesoever it proceeds; and especially to preserve his own mind from being led away by spe-

cious novelties and untried speculations, which impatience under immediate pressure and difficulty, or a propensity to empiricism, perhaps germane to our nature, will ever be pressing on his favourable consideration.

But the political conduct of one exercising authority under the influence of religious principle, will be yet more distinctively characterized. Time was in our history when fanaticism reigned in the public councils, and men went forth "in the name of the Lord," "doing their own ways, and finding their own pleasure¹." This, however, has long gone by, and a sort of fashionable scepticism now prevails, which, if it has not reached the length of declaring openly "that we will not have him to rule over us," at least does so by tacit inference. On these "signs of the times" the Christian Statesman looks with an anxious disquietude. He turns back to the records of past ages, and sees empires that rise with a high and generous promise, corrupted by prosperity, decline and decay, till at length they disappear, and "their place is no more found." And doth he seek a memorial in our own days of the signal wrath of God against a rebellious nation? Half a century has not elapsed since the besom of destruction swept over a neighbouring state, with

¹ Isaiah lviii. 13.

a terror at whose sound the ear yet tingles. And why? Because its offence mounted up even to heaven; and the Lord of Hosts was defied to avenge His honour and His altars, which infidelity laid prostrate in the dust.

Nor is the history of God's people without a lesson to us. When after a series of mercies and warnings Judah still continued in impenitence and hardness of heart, the conqueror came and led them away captive, and "by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept, when they remembered Sion¹." But when their days were accomplished and their captivity ended, and they were restored to their wasted and desolate country, then did they submissively listen to the lawgiver, and weep, and mourn, and humble themselves before the Lord, till the gracious words of assurance came, "Go your way, for this day is holy to the Lord your God; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength²." Have we no cause to be afraid lest we turn a deaf ear till the voice of His anger be heard in the tempest; and that our country may be laid waste, and our Sion desolated, ere we humble ourselves before Him in sincerity of heart?

In this still favoured land we may perhaps hope that such dreadful retribution will yet be averted:

¹ Psalm cxxxvii. 1.

² Nehem. viii. 13.

for though the fallen Archangel, as he hovers over, marks not a few willing instruments in the performance of his behests;—though blasphemous tongues are heard in our streets, and the wise in their own conceit scoff at the Majesty on high;—though self-indulgence and luxury may have induced over the senses a sleep the more fatal as the more insidious, and the far-spreading influence of the unrighteous mammon has enclosed so large a portion within his net;—a counter spirit, thanks be to God, is rife among us; a spirit of preparation and of exertion more and more increasing: and if ten righteous could once have saved the cities of the plain, may we not hope that enough can be found amongst us whose prayer of intercession may yet avail, and mount with acceptance to the throne of grace?

The Christian Statesman ponders these things in his heart, and to be the instrument of promoting religion throughout the land is his most earnest desire. And is he dismayed at the small assistance on which he can depend, he remembers how the good Josiah, though for a time he stood alone in his work of reformation, yet, “as he turned not aside to the right hand or to the left¹,” at length was blest in the accomplishment, and “all the

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 2, &c.

people stood to the covenant¹” which the king made before the Lord.

As to uphold, then, Religion throughout the land he feels to be a paramount duty, with this view the Church of Christ is a special object of his care. To her connexion with the State he attaches vital importance, inasmuch as it is to the advantage of each, though by no means in an equal degree. The Church is doubtless benefited, —since her privileges and dignities are guarantied by the State; since her doctrines are acknowledged by law as the standard of truth; and since, as an establishment, she can conduct her parochial ministrations unaffected by the fluctuations of popular favour and caprice. But far greater is the gain to the State by the compact; in having religion in a pure and apostolical form regularly circulated and taught throughout the land by a duly authorized and qualified priesthood, whence not only are law and order more efficaciously maintained, but, according to the divine promise, a blessing more surely brought upon the people. And as the Sovereign is bound by the inaugural oath to uphold that branch of the true Church established in these dominions, the Christian Statesman would consider it treachery to the

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

trust committed to him, did he not act up to the spirit as well as to the letter of so solemn and sacred an obligation. Not only therefore does he maintain in their perfect integrity the rights, and privileges, and property of the Church, but he feels himself bound to remedy her deficiencies to the utmost of his power. Where faction, and disorder, and vice prevail, it is because her means are inadequate to their object. The soil can only be enriched as far as the fertilizing waters extend. No destitution is more urgent than spiritual destitution. The wants of a widely-increasing population are crying, and must be met. No calamity is greater to a Christian people than the want of Christian worship commensurate to its numbers. This a nation has a right to demand ; and tremendous will be the reckoning to that holder of power who dares to deny so just and imperative a claim !—“ Whosoever shall be ashamed of me of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels ¹.”

The support which the Christian Statesman affords to the ecclesiastical establishment is, however, utterly untinctured with bigotry and intolerance. Towards those who are without its pale he behaves with kindness and consideration ; and

¹ Mark viii. 38.

he is no where backward in the furtherance of vital religion, though he may regret, and regret deeply, the want of uniformity and concord among its professors. But while he treats with indulgence a mere conscientious dissent, when it assumes, as it does too often, the face and bearing of hostility, there is no truckling nor trimming, nor courting of popularity ; but he at once stands forward in defence of the national Church, and as far as his power and influence allow, he resolutely checks the approaches of aggression—“Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.”

But he is careful, moreover, to take up his position on no narrow and insufficient ground. The Church claims a divine commission. It is his duty to try and examine into her claim ; and when duly convinced of its validity, then to hold her up as the minister and representative of God, from whom all power is derived. Hence, though in all things temporal she is subject to the State ; in spiritual, he acknowledges not only her independence but her authority ; and in proportion as these mutual relations are preserved inviolate, just so much do they co-operate towards the common benefit. If by any combination of circumstances the Church should gain such power as to attempt to control the civil functions, the Christian Statesman would be among the foremost to

resist the encroachment. On the other hand, should the State, as is far more probable, venture to meddle, as it has heretofore, with ecclesiastical rights,—to tamper with her rituals or articles of faith ; to alienate her legitimate dues ; to divert her property from its just appropriation ; or still more fatally to undermine her influence by abusing patronage to political purposes, and appointing unworthy or inefficient ministers to her high places ;—then would he loudly and earnestly, even though he stood alone, protest against the unwarranted, the unholy aggression. In promulgating what he holds to be a cardinal truth, he may be heard unwillingly, his principles may be misunderstood, his purpose calumniated, yet he trusts that he is only in advance of public opinion, and that the time is coming when this truth will be comprehended and acted upon.

Chapter XII.

THE POLITICS OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

(Continued.)

“The wheels of a watch move as fast and as quick when it goes false as when it goes true ; and if the watch be but at first set right and true, the same activity that makes it go false will make the motions go right and orderly.”—BISHOP HOPKINS.

To further the interests of religion according to his opportunity is manifestly incumbent upon the Christian Gentleman : but when power is entrusted to him, this becomes a matter of the most anxious consideration. His high ambition is to be an humble instrument towards accomplishing the divine plan ; to carry on the glorious work of national reformation ; to raise the land he loves in the favour of God ; and by calling down a blessing on her rulers and their councils, to transmit her “in wealth, peace, and goodness,” a people

fearing the Lord, to succeeding generations. Though he upholds, then, to the utmost the great charter of spiritual liberty secured at our emancipation from Papal tyranny, and limits none in the free exercise of their religious opinions, to give due efficacy to the ministrations of the Church, as the authorized agent for maintaining the national faith, is an object ever foremost in his view. But this can only be attained by beginning aright. An increase must be looked for in proportion to the seed sown. If the soil be not carefully tilled the produce will be tares. The wicked one is ever on the watch to take advantage of any neglect: if the mind be not betimes preoccupied by what is good, it will be speedily overrun with the rank luxuriance of evil. Hence the urgency of providing for the early instruction of youth in the doctrines of inspired truth. The children of this world, who are sufficiently wise in their generation, are pressing the demand for general education: the servant of his Lord and Master admits the claim, but insists that such education be founded on the only sure base, that of Christian knowledge. To instruct the head and neglect the heart is an insult to the Majesty on high. It is to erect a temple to the pride of our fallen nature which will not fail to draw down the thunderbolts of heaven. Secular learning is useful—it may be imperative—

but if it be imbibed without that admixture of meekness and humility which is only taught in the revealed will of God, it becomes a poison alike noxious to the recipient and to society. The Christian Statesman is as abhorrent of ignorance as the worldly philosopher, but knowledge must be drawn from a pure, and not from a turbid and unwholesome source. To carry education, therefore, to the utmost corners of the land is very near to his heart, but it must be a scriptural education. And to whom should the machinery of this mighty work be entrusted but to those whose office it specially is to bring up the people "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Shall a hireling be called in when the shepherd is at hand? And if the Church be not fit to superintend the training of, at least, her own children, she is untrue to her vocation, and unworthy to occupy the place allotted to her. A people that is not religious is hateful to God. Religion will not thrive unless it be early sown and carefully nurtured, and if the culture be not in the hands of those appointed to the husbandry, in vain shall we turn to other quarters. Costly structures may be raised, and their doors wide opened; and the preacher may lift up his voice like the Baptist in the wilderness; but if the ear be not in some degree accustomed in the school, the voice will

too often fall on it as a strange sound. Habituate the mind from the first to the contemplation of truth, and like other objects thus familiarized, she appears the more lovely, the more endeared ; and he who has looked upon religion as the companion of his childhood will be loth to throw her off in advancing life. Strike the impression while the metal is soft and warm, and it will retain it amid the hardening and chilling influence of the world. The rationalist may talk as he will against early bias and prejudice ; the Christian Statesman has read another chapter in the history of his race. Preoccupy is his principle. Defend betimes against the approach of evil. The children of his country are his special charge ; to them he looks with hopeful anticipation ; through them to renovating our social state ; and by opening the sluice of religious instruction upon all the ranks of the rising generation, to circulate health through our dense, and, alas ! diseased population,—health, peace, and comfort here, and eternal peace and happiness hereafter.

And never, perhaps, in the course of our history was this obligation more imperative than now. We are forewarned by the awful voice of prophecy, that before the final triumph of the Messiah's kingdom, the great enemy of mankind will be let loose for a season, and fierce and

deadly will be the conflict between good and evil over the whole earth. Whether there be cause to suppose this period drawing nigh we know not; but it cannot be questioned that there are ominous appearances, threatening aspects all around, which seem to tell that we are entering on times of peculiar difficulty and danger. And if this be so, how urgent is it that those stationed at the helm be not taken by surprise! Not to reckon the quarters whence peril is to be apprehended, or the various causes which may give rise to it; the delusions practised on the young and ignorant, and that almost without let or hindrance, must be accounted among the most alarming notes of the age. Infidelity has within these very few years appeared in a more gross and undisguised shape than this country ever witnessed before; and numerous, it is to be feared, are the victims among our ill-instructed classes, while the law is openly defied, either from its own inherent weakness or the culpable remissness of those who administer it:

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy :
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy¹.”

To help to preserve the pure and blessed light,
to give strength to escape from bondage, ere yet

¹ Wordsworth.

it hath closed around,—how glorious an object for one whom Providence has advanced to high places ! Let the Gospel sound penetrate our crowded streets and alleys, and let the infant mind be impressed with Gospel precepts and truths throughout the length and breadth of the land,—then, indeed, may we front the future with a sure, well-grounded confidence. With a host of defenders thus trained through childhood and youth to maturity, our Zion will be fortified, her bulwarks strengthened, and “though the blast of the terrible ones be as a storm against the wall ¹,” we shall meet the danger, come when it may, unbroken and undismayed.

Nor is it within the natural limits of the soil that care for the diffusion of evangelical knowledge must be confined. As our rapidly-increasing numbers are encroaching more and more on the means of subsistence afforded them at home, yearly doth the country pour forth thousands to carry the British name, British connexion, and British commerce to the farthest corner of the earth. And shall not the religion of our native land be extended likewise? Shall her sons be sent out through widely distant climes, and their mother not provide for their spiritual sustenance ? Shall not the worship of her God accompany her

¹ *Isaiah xxv. 4.*

empire through whatever latitudes her authority is acknowledged? To stint the efforts of the Church by a niggardly parsimony in carrying her message of light and peace to the utmost limits of our dominion, the Christian Statesman accounts a defrauding of God. He believes our nation to be called, at this time especially, to a work which she will neglect at her peril. Are we raised up but to do our own pleasure? Are our garners filled with all manner of store but that we may revel, and pamper our corrupt inclinations? Do our fleets cover the seas that we may boast us of our power, or are our ports thronged with merchandize but that we may grow rich and forget God? Have we knowledge to puff up and exalt us in our own eyes? and do we possess the truth and shall we not communicate? We are but the instruments of a Sovereign Power. A mighty work is entrusted to our hands,—accomplish it, and our seed shall inherit the land; the eye of Heaven will continue to look favourably upon us: but if in our pride we deny God's rule among us; if we turn us from His behests and are deaf to His words, we stand but the more obnoxious to His just indignation; our elevation but marks us for a surer fall.

Thus to promote the great cause of religion, and thereby to secure the best interests of his country, is the predominant purpose of that man who

applies power to its legitimate object,—the extension of God's kingdom. He neglects not other matters of national importance, as his policy is wide, comprehensive, and provident; but he considers all of inferior moment, inasmuch as to make sure of the favour and protection of Heaven must ever be the primary object of a truly Christian people. Nations rise and fall, flourish and decay, according to the will of the Great Ruler of all. Is it not folly, is it not madness to provoke His wrath, under whose wings we may be safe, but at the breath of whose displeasure we shall wither and die? Should, however, a blind infatuation prevail; should "the people imagine a vain thing¹" and refuse to listen to his voice; the Christian Statesman retires from an useless and unequal contest: but if the spirit yet survive; if the spark still glimmer, he desists not from fanning it in spite of every discouragement from the pride, the selfishness, the worldliness which overlay it, too happy if he be repaid even in distant prospect by the flame of godliness spreading through the land. Others may enjoy a loftier fame in human estimation: he is content with this, that amid the turbulence and roar of conflicting elements, when the signs are dark and the menace impending, he has striven to moor the

¹ Psalm ii. 1.

vessel, where it only can be secure, by the stedfast anchor of revealed truth. He has warned the people of their danger if they hold not fast, and whether they "hear or whether they forbear¹," he has been faithful—he has done his duty. Verily the retrospect of a public life thus spent in the service of man, and in the fear of God, will bring a peace at the last far more than commensurate with the unrest, the disquietude, the vexation of spirit, he may have endured in the course of his anxious career.

¹ Ezek. ii. 7.

Chapter XIII.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

“ The stones that are appointed for that glorious temple above are hewn and polished and prepared for it here, as the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for building the temple of Jerusalem.”—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

THE religion of the Christian Gentleman is pure Christianity. This might appear a truism were it not but too manifest how much that is base passes current under the name. It is not a mere conviction brought to the mind by the force of evidence, but an inward sense of need, a consciousness of disease, which here, and here only, can find a remedy. He knows himself the work of an Almighty Artificer, responsible even for each passing thought to one in whose sight the heavens themselves are not clean: and then he looks into

his heart and discovers there such weakness, such corruption, such disorganization, that the eye of an offended God meets him at every turn, and the terrors of a broken law seem suspended over his head. Happily the same process which led to the detection of the evil hath led him likewise to the only adequate means of recovery. The light of divine revelation hath burst upon his benighted soul; the wonders of redeeming love have been opened before him; and with a deep-felt sense of his own unworthiness he “hath taken the cup of salvation, and called upon the name of the Lord¹. ” Repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ are the fundamental principles on which his profession is grounded. He hath cordially, thankfully, accepted the terms of pardon offered him in the Gospel. He hath come—he daily cometh to the foot of the cross, conscious of his ever-present infirmities and corruptions, and he strikes upon his breast and saith, “Lord be merciful to me a sinner²!”

It is thus that the Christian walks humbly with his God. He has nothing of his own that he can offer, for his best performances when weighed in the balance are found wanting, and he has need of forgiveness even in his nearest approaches to his Maker. If, then, he must appear at the bar

¹ Psalm cxvi. 12.

² Luke xviii. 13.

of divine justice, cleansed from all sin, and clothed in righteousness, the cleansing must be in “the blood of the Lamb slain for him before the foundation of the world¹,” and the righteousness must be the righteousness of Him who “knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth²:” and it is through faith that he derives this saving power. He must believe that he hath been ransomed, or the price will have been paid in vain. He must believe that the vengeance of a just God is satisfied, or he will have to satisfy it in his own person. Faith then is the mainspring which moves and regulates him. It is as necessary to his soul that the existence of things unseen should be realized to the spiritual eye through faith, as it is to his corporeal wants that the visual organ be habituated to the objects that surround. Nor is it a mere assent of the intellect, a cold belief that is required. It is a dependence on God’s promises, a childlike trust in His care, a confidence that He doeth all things for his own;—for their well-being here, and their eternal happiness hereafter. But how is this faith acquired? Can one so corrupt dispose his own heart aright; can a being so weak ascend by his own strength on high? The law of works had said, “Do this and live;” but man was unable to perform its demands, and

¹ Rev. xiii. 8.

² 1 Peter ii. 22, 23.

therefore he became liable to death. The law of grace saith, “ Believe and be saved;” but this would have been equally impossible to our fallen and degenerate nature, had not the bloodshedding that opened the gate of everlasting life at the same time obtained the blessed influence of the Spirit to prevent, to guide, to purify, and to sustain. Man¹ “ being born in original sin and in the wrath of God is by the laver of regeneration

¹ “ The definition of original sin, which is given by Melancthon, appears to be most comprehensive and most intelligible: it is also the same which has been adopted, with some variations, by nearly all the Reformed Churches; and the terms of it enable us to see, at one view, the two opposite errors which had been entertained concerning this doctrine. Melancthon first defines sin to be anything which carries with it guilt in the sight of God; and he meant this to apply to sin of every kind, whether original or actual. He then gives the definition of original sin; though properly speaking it approaches nearer to a division than a definition;—he defines it to be both guilt in consequence of the fall of Adam, and also an inclination to that which is contrary to the law of God. The two parts of this definition are very different: the first is an inherent disability, wholly independent of any corruption of the heart, and to which we are exposed merely as descendants of him on whom the sentence of condemnation was originally pronounced; hence this is called original sin, *peccatum originis*, or the guilt which we derive from that origin from which we are descended. The second part of the definition includes the natural corruption of the heart and the inclination to evil, which are also inherited by our descent from Adam: and hence this also is *peccatum originis*, the sin or sinfulness which comes to us from our origin or first parents.”—BURTON’s Sermons, p. 106.

in Baptism received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life¹.” The seal of this covenant is the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby alone is the neophyte enabled to perform what has been engaged for him, “ that he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end².”

But the presence of this divine inmate must be duly cherished in the soul. “ Quench not the Spirit³,” is the awful warning : and if it be perseveringly neglected or opposed ; if in despite of its suggestions wilful sin be persisted in ; it may be so far vexed and grieved as at length to desert us, —and then “ better, indeed, had it been for that man if he never had been born.”

“ Thy word is a lantern unto my feet and a light unto my paths⁴,” saith the Psalmist : and it is by “ exercising himself in the Holy Scriptures day and night,” that the Christian keeps his soul as it were a consecrated shrine whence his free-will offering ascends on high, with an acceptable savour. Prayer, it has been well observed, is to the soul what respiration is to the body. The

¹ Public Baptism of Infants.

² Ibid.

³ 1 Thess. v. 19.

⁴ Psalm cxix. 105.

spiritual as well as the animal functions are alike invigorated by the breath of Heaven. Cut off either from free access to the source of life, and decay and death will speedily follow. Hence devout meditation and communing with his God are to him constant occupations ;—whether in the privacy of the closet where his thoughts may take a freer range, and his wants and desires be more explicitly detailed ; or not less in the Lord's house, where he joins heart and voice with the assembly of the faithful, remembering the promise, “where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them¹.” And especially by the frequent partaking of the blessed Eucharist doth he experience in the mystical union with Christ the efficacy of sacramental grace in ripening into fruit the implanted seed. But though he thus advances in progressive sanctification, tribulation and conflict will still attend him. The Christian's life is a life of warfare even in its best estate ; for though sin have lost the dominion, through the power of the Spirit, still its motions within the soul will be sorely felt. Temptations do arise in the renewed heart of man, to which, either through surprise, or weakness, or the remaining force of corruption, he too often gives way ; and then in humble contrition he

¹ Matt. xviii. 20.

mourns over his frailty, and seeks pardon in that blood which alone can wash out sin.

Notwithstanding however these hindrances, his backslidings, and shortcomings, the habitual sense of one thus exercised is that of peace; for he combats not in self-dependence, but trusting in Him whose word hath promised, “My strength is sufficient for thee¹.” He knows that millions of saints who now repose in everlasting rest have experienced similar trials and discouragements, yet they fought the fight, they gained the crown, and may now be looking down in confident expectation that he too will be added to their glorious company. And who can tell but every conflict gained over the enemy may be hastening the coming of that day, when “old things shall pass away and all shall be new²,” when there shall be fulness of joy in Heaven, and “death shall be swallowed up in victory³? ”

The indwelling then of the Spirit in the soul is the root of true evangelical religion. Hence it is a religion of love and not of fear; at least not of slavish fear. But though love is the principle which unites the Christian to his God, there is nothing in it of a mere contemplative or mystical character, as has been often the error of heated fancies to imagine; but it is a love which, spring-

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

ing from a sense of unspeakable benefits received, fits and stimulates to the performance of whatever it may be called to, "not grudgingly or of necessity¹," but with free and cordial self-dedication. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do²?" is the question ever uppermost in the mind of the true believer; and whether it be to act or endure, he is equally prepared. But this cannot be effected without cultivation of Christian graces, and that on Christian grounds; for if we miss the right road at the commencement, we only increase the error as we advance.

When the image of God became obscured in the heart of man by the Fall, an inherent consciousness still remained, a perception of, and often a desire for, something higher and better; and qualities were preserved, dim shadows indeed of what were lost, yet calculated to improve and elevate him, as well as to sweeten and adorn the social state. Hence these qualities have always attracted the love or admiration of the world; nor is it seldom that in the developement of what is moral a sense of the spiritual is obtained; but they are nevertheless totally distinct in their origin, and as such require to be carefully discriminated. To select a few for illustration. Courage and fortitude are truly Christian qualities:—

¹ 2 Cor. ix. 7.

² Acts ix. 6.

“ Be bold, be resolute,” is the frequent admonition of Scripture; and to be ready to suffer, to encounter danger or death when required, is a marked feature in the character of the soldier of Jesus Christ. But there is another sort of valour which men prize, and prize justly, from its influence upon the affairs of the world, which springs either from native hardihood, from a quick sense of honour, or from an ardent desire of fame. In these two kinds of courage there are many points in common, and in ordinary cases their bearing may be similar, as they are both derived from inward firmness and strength: but they may be tried by this test. Christian courage will only be afraid of acting contrary to God; worldly courage will shrink before the opinion of the world.

Temperance is another quality which may easily be mistaken. To keep under the body, to control all carnal affections, holds a permanent place in evangelical discipline; and to pamper the appetite is no small sin; for whether we eat or drink, we are to “ do all to the glory of God¹. ” Fasting is often spoken of as giving efficacy to prayer, hence it is obvious how distinguished a Christian duty is Temperance. But a man may be temperate without any reference to religious obligation.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 31.

He may be so constitutionally. He may be so in order to preserve his health, or in deference to the society in which he lives. The motive then is the point to ascertain. It is a virtue that to all brings its reward with it; but whether it be acceptable to God entirely depends whether His pleasure be herein sought.

Again, humility and meekness, truly Christian ornaments, may find their counterparts in placid and timid dispositions: gentleness may arise from mere suppleness, and content from indolence: in these the quality of the tree must be discovered, and then the nature of the fruit will be ascertained.

The last Christian grace which shall be named is that chieftest of all graces, Charity—rated by the Apostle even above hope and faith. Yet this too has its semblance in the world, which, however deservedly valued by man, wants the “one thing needful” to make it of value in the estimation of God. There is in some an amiability, a suavity of temper and mind, a benignity of manner and benevolence of heart, which, happily implanted by nature, have been fostered by favourable circumstances of training and education, and perhaps by the salutary chastisement of affliction. These we cherish affectionately, and of all inferior qualities unquestionably such approach nearest to

those so highly prized in the Gospel; but still they do not flow from that heavenly source which welleth forth from beneath the throne of divine Love; and all affections, however engaging, which spring not thence, are only of the earth, earthly. How far all that can be acquired by mere natural culture falls short of the scriptural definition of Charity, is shown by the exquisite enumeration of Christian excellences comprehended under that term in the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. A faint shadow of some of them may be found in the heart which is a stranger to the influence of the Spirit; but the substance of all, developed in greater or less degree, must be discoverable in the effectually regenerate; for in proportion as his sanctification has advanced, so has he progressed in Christian Charity.

Chapter XIV.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

(Continued.)

“ Do but thy duty, and rely upon’t,
Repentance, faith, obedience,
Whenever practised truly, will amount
To an authentic evidence,
Though the deed were antedated at the Font.”

HERBERT.

THE philosophy of the Christian Gentleman is expansive and elevating. It is a favourite employment of his leisure hours to examine with a chastened yet searching eye into the order of things around him, and to follow the ways and workings of Providence, ruling and overruling towards the general good. The great sage of antiquity, by the mere light of reason, was enabled to apprehend this cardinal truth¹. Supreme power, whence all

¹ Plato, Timæus.

things exist, must necessarily, he argued, be exercised by mind, to which perfection essentially belongs. Wisdom and goodness are portions of perfection; and thus by sublime but simple induction, he reached the conclusion, that the universe was created, sustained, and regulated, by the active superintendence of an all-benevolent Intelligence. Glorious is it to think that what the wisest of old could attain but by the finest process of ratiocination, should now be “revealed to babes¹:” and what Plato was only permitted to see “as through a glass darkly,” the humblest believer enjoys, as it were, “face to face².³” The beautiful analogies that are to be found between the physical and moral governance of the world; the order discoverable beneath apparent confusion; the exquisite fitness and adaptation of the several parts to the whole, and the gradual developements which may be traced, however imperfectly unfolded, towards the accomplishment of one grand design: all these afford to the Christian Philosopher inexhaustible sources of interesting speculation. But it is on his own species that his contemplation principally rests: man in his manifold varieties, yet still the same; with such diversity of feature, yet preserving a common likeness. As the ever-changing phases of the moon present a natural phenomenon

¹ Luke x. 21.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

which science only can explain ; so to the Christian alone is expounded the moral phenomenon of man, so dark a puzzle ere revealed by the Gospel. Our fall from pristine purity and but partial restoration is the clue to all that appears so strange and mysterious ; and the great purpose of completing this restoration is the history of God's dealings with His rational creatures. But since they are rational they must be accountable ; hence they are to be influenced, not coerced ; invited and led, but not compelled ; for freedom of action is necessary to a responsible being :—yet all things, both in heaven and on earth, are ordered according to His sovereign pleasure. How then does the enlightened but humble enquirer meet this difficulty ? Does he embrace one side of the proposition, and deny or suppress the other ? or does he torture his reason to apprehend the seeming contradiction ? Here indeed is a battling ground which has been occupied for centuries, and much strife and bitterness might have been spared, could the disputants have been satisfied not to be wise beyond what is written. The searcher for truth opens his Bible, and finds that these things are so ; that man is treated as free, and yet that God's dominion is absolute ; and since by no regular process of mind he can reconcile these positions, he accepts each truth in submis-

sion of heart, knowing that He who hath said can also make it good¹. For shall the minute eye of the creature pretend to comprehend the Creator? Must the counsels of the Omnipotent be brought to our span? Much He hath no doubt condescended to reveal; but a finger hath limited the grasp of the human intellect;—"Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." In truth, reason is baffled wheresoever it turns, when it presumes to stray beyond its appointed bound. What knoweth it of immensity, ubiquity, and eternity? What counteth it of spirit immaterial yet essential? And that mystery which is around us, amongst us, and within us, Evil—whence did it arise; and why is its existence permitted by an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-beneficent Ruler of the Universe? If we cannot mount up into Heaven and unveil Omnipotence, we must be content with imperfection, while we are humbly thankful that we possess such knowledge as is sufficient for us. And how do the wisest and best treat the difficulties which they meet in their enquiries into the hidden ways of God? "In these matters I am so fearful," says the holy martyr, Ridley, "that I dare not speak farther, yea, almost none otherwise than the text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand²." And Luther, no timid investigator of truth, writes

¹ Numb. xxiii. 19.

² Ridley, Martyrs' Letters 65.

thus¹, “Many have persisted in the indulgence of such curious inquiries (the decrees of God) ; it is a temptation which leads even to blasphemy. I, myself, by giving way to it, have more than once been reduced to the last extremity. We poor mortals, by faith, can scarcely comprehend a few rays of the Divine promise, or receive in practice a few sparks of the Divine precepts ; and yet, feeble and impure as we are, we rashly attempt to fathom the majesty of God in all its brightness. Do we not know that His ways are past finding out? Instead of using well the mild light of the promises which is adapted to our faculties, we rush with eyes of moles to view at once the majestic splendour of the Deity. What wonder then if His glory should overwhelm us in the attempt to investigate it? We ought to know that there is such a thing as the secret will of God ; but the danger is when we attempt to comprehend it. I am wont to check myself with that answer of Christ to Peter, ‘What is that to thee? follow thou me².’”

It is this pride of heart, this aspiring “to be as gods, knowing good and evil³,” entailed on their posterity by our first parents, that the system of

¹ Luther on Predestination : Milner’s Church Hist., vol. v. p. 1116.

² John xxi. 23.

³ Gen. iii. 5.

moral government God is pleased to employ is so admirably suited to control. Did He rule only by sight; did consequences immediately follow their causes; were vice invariably punished and virtue rewarded; did innocence always triumph, and prudence meet with success;—events would so much fall within human calculation, that there would scarcely seem any room for future disposition; since justice being so nicely apportioned here, men would be led to boast in self-dependence, and in the forcible language of the Prophet to “sacrifice unto their net, to burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous¹. ” On the other hand, was every thing so entirely left to be settled hereafter, that mortal concerns appeared to take their own course now, the faith of the believer might be tried beyond what it could bear; and from observing no note of a superintending eye, “the fool” might say “in his heart, There is no God²,” or, at least none that takes cognizance of what passes below. As it is, we just see enough in the common dealings of Providence to know that He is watchful over all His works; though the rule of His ordering cannot always be traced. Hence faith directs itself with implicit confidence to that day when the equality of God’s ways will be

¹ Hab. i. 16.

² Ps. lxxi. 6.

manifested ; at the same time that reason cannot puff itself up with the idea that it can escape from a superior control¹.

But here a question arises which deeply occupies the Christian enquirer's thoughts. If God's dominion over his creatures is so evident that none can fail to observe it unless he wilfully and pertinaciously shut his eyes, whence is it that men usually pass their lives apparently taking

¹ Bishop Jebb in one of his letters to Mr. Knox mentions what he calls a favourite idea of his, namely, the superiority of the *αἰσθησία*, the spiritual perception or discernment spoken of by St. Paul, Phil. i. 9., and enlarged upon 1 Cor. ii. 14, to the *γνῶσις* or mere ratiocinative knowledge. The prevailing sentiment of the present day, however, is intolerant of any dispute as to the supremacy of reason, which is scarcely more undisguisedly worshipped now than in France during the height of her revolutionary madness. Not only is religion deeply infected with what are called rationalistic principles ; but utilitarianism, the distinctive character of the age, is so strongly impregnated with this semi-infidelity, that we may greatly fear lest, while we are flattering ourselves on our health and vitality, a subtle decay is working through our frame. A counteracting spirit has happily arisen, but far inadequate as yet to check the evil. May God give us grace ere it be too late to cleanse ourselves from this iniquity of unbelief, and to turn unto Him with true contrition, and faithfulness of heart, lest it be with us, as described by the Psalmist, "I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree. I went by, and lo ! he was gone : I sought him, but his place could no where be found *."

* Psalm xxxvii. 36, 37.

this so little into account? They profess to believe, but their actions seem to belie their profession. The mass whirl on in their giddy course as if they were thus to continue for ever; and when they are brought to a pause; when at last they are forced to stop; it is either with a stupid insensibility, or with an awakening of surprise, of horror, and perhaps despair. This has been at all times a mournful subject of contemplation. One who had seen mankind in every variety, and experienced much both of good and evil in the world, has a noble passage to this purpose:— “Though our own eyes do every where behold the sudden and resistless assaults of death, and nature assureth us by never-failing experience, and reason by infallible demonstration, that our times upon the earth have neither certainty nor durability; that our bodies are but the anvils of pain and diseases, and our minds the hives of unnumbered cares, sorrows, and passions: yet such is the blindness and true unhappiness of our condition, and the dark ignorance which covereth the eyes of our understanding, that we only prize, pamper, and exalt this vassal and slave of death, and forget altogether, or only remember at our cast-away leisure, the imprisoned immortal soul, which can neither die with the reprobate, nor perish with the mortal parts of virtuous men,

seeing God's justice in the one, and His goodness in the other, is exercised for evermore as the ever-living subjects of His reward or punishment. But when is it we examine this great account? Never while we have our vanity left us to spend. We plead for titles till our breath fail us; dig for riches while our strength enableth us; exercise malice while we can revenge; and then, when time hath beaten from us both youth, pleasure, and health, and nature itself hateth the house of old age, we remember with Job, that we must go the way from whence we shall not return, and that our bed is made ready for us in the dark; and then, I say, looking over-late into the bottom of our conscience, which pleasure and ambition had locked from us all our lives, we behold therein the fearful images of our actions past, and withal this terrible inscription, 'That God will bring every work into judgment that man hath done under the sun.' * * * * But let us not flatter our immortal souls herein; for to neglect God all our lives and know that we neglect Him; to offend God voluntarily and know that we offend Him, (casting our hopes on the peace which we trust to make at parting,) is no other than a rebellious presumption, and that which is worst of all, a contemptuous laughing to scorn and deriding of God, His laws, and precepts. They hope in vain, says St. Ber-

nard, who in this sort flatter themselves with God's mercy!."

Feelingly does the Christian Gentleman acknowledge the truth of this picture: but while he laments over the low state of religion in the world, he turns in unto himself with severe application. He communes with his spirit, and diligently searches into his heart, and much cause does he find for humility and self-abasement: weakness in his purposes, irresolution in his attempts, shortcoming, nay, too often failure in his performances: in truth his standard appears wholly above his reach, so heavy a clog is the body to the more spiritual part of his nature. Compared, indeed, with some previous portion of his life, a great change has taken place in his dispositions. What was first with him once is of little or no moment now; nay, perhaps, what he formerly cherished in his heart he now repudiates with abhorrence. The Devil is no longer his master. The flesh and the lusts thereof no more hold him in subjection; and the world has lost its false delusion and glare. Still his progress is so slow; he meets with such impediments at every step, that he might well despair, were it not for the inward support of which he is conscious. Let him persevere, however, with a stout and stedfast heart. Every act of

¹ Sir W. Raleigh, Hist. of the World, vol. ii. p. 60.

resistance weakens the force of attack. By a law of our nature, what we do becomes easier by repetition, till at length the Christian arrives at that blessed condition in which to do well is as familiar as was once to do evil ; and the sense of privilege and enjoyment in walking closely with his God is more ready to his mind than the fear of offending or of falling away.

When this state becomes at all realized, the inward life of the Christian is indeed one of “peace which passeth all understanding.” External circumstances may affect him, but only in the degree that passing objects engage the attention of the wayfarer. They do not for a moment distract him from his main purpose. He is hastening to his rest : it is not here to be found :— and come what may, he still is happy. Is he blest in his social relations,—with health,—with abundance,— the consciousness whence these benefits proceed give them a greater zest : yet he clings not too closely to them ; they were lent him in mercy, and may in mercy be recalled. But is the hand of affliction upon him : is he in sickness or in sorrow ; deserted or bereaved ? He hath an unfailing consolation ; a Friend that will not, that cannot forsake him ; and when danger besets and tribulation encompasses, he boldly confronts

¹ Phil. iv. 7.



whatever may oppose, while he folds to his breast that gracious promise, “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee¹.”

¹ *Isaiah xliii. 1, 2.*

Chapter XV.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

(continued.)

“ Whence is it that so many among the Saints have arrived at so high a state ? It is because they have applied themselves to mortify every earthly desire, and thus have had strength to give up their whole heart to God, and to watch over their salvation with freedom of spirit.”

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

WE have hitherto spoken of Faith as developed into action in the ordinary course of the Christian Gentleman’s life. But there are peculiar characters wherein this grace is occasionally exhibited, which require to be separately considered. The aspects religious duty presents necessarily vary with varying states and circumstances. The faith of one whom it hath pleased God to place in a low and destitute condition is shown in cheerful reliance on His provision, who “ feedeth the young ravens

that call upon him¹;" receiving thankfully this provision, by whatever hands supplied: content with his own, though but a little;—without grudging the abundance of others ;—in short, his is a faith of meek submission, patient endurance, and cheerful resignation. But to that man whom the same Providence hath entrusted with so large a portion of this world's good, as to afford the means of gratifying every wish;—surrounded by those whose business it is to minister to his comfort;—met on all sides by respect;—accustomed to honour: the faith of such, it is evident, must be exercised in an essentially different manner.

Trust in God teaches the one acquiescence in his lot, and to rest secure that privations are assigned for his benefit: the other learns from the same source to watch carefully, "lest his heart be made fat and his ears heavy²"; lest his wealth be to him an occasion of falling, and the consideration of personal ease and enjoyment render this earth his resting place, this world only his possession. Such will be the prevailing feeling of whosoever are under the sense of divine supervision, but this feeling will be more or less acute, according to their quickness of spiritual perception.

That scriptural injunctions are looked upon in a very different light even by those sincere in their

¹ Ps. cxlvii. 9.

² Isa. vi. 10.

profession, every man's experience shows ; and we may believe this to be consistent with the arrangements of Providence for carrying on the complicated concerns of the world. By some law we cannot understand, one seems to be called to one thing, and another to another ; and though both may be arranged under the same rule of action, its mode of application is different. Hence the diversity in men's convictions, even when derived from the self-same source. One, for instance, in possession of ease and affluence considers that temperately to enjoy is the best means of testifying his gratitude to the Giver of all good. Another regarding in a stricter sense this life a pilgrimage through a thirsty desert, thinks on little else but how he may readiest accomplish it :—the solaces, therefore, he holds in little account, and things lawful in themselves he esteems as hindrances, if they at all distract his attention from his one great object. Now these different lines may be pursued under the influence of the same principle. Each may reckon himself within the bounds of duty, and so it may be ; yet the truly spiritualized Christian is able to discriminate, and rightly to estimate the higher walk, the one that leads most directly to its end. When he beholds a man who in simple devotedness hath really given up all to follow Christ : whether it be lawful profit, dis-

tinction and honour, or ties of the dearest and closest kind, which he has surrendered the more effectually to perform his Master's work ; shall it be said that such has been actuated by mere peculiarity of disposition, an ardour of temperament running into extremes ; that his conduct is so little referable to any ordinary rule, that though some may admire, it cannot be held up for edification and example ? The Christian Gentleman thinketh not so ; but in looking on those "burning and shining lights" which from time to time have appeared in the world, he feels awakened in him an holy ambition, and his fervent prayer is for such supply of grace that he may be continually advancing with a firmer step, and daily increasing strength. And let no one think that to any the Christian course can be an easy one. Privation and sorrow are to the many their constant attendants from the cradle to the grave. And if so severe a discipline be generally necessary even when the world offers so little to allure ; and it would not be awarded unless it were ; can it be safe for any to range within its attractions without deafening their ears and covering their eyes ? The kingdom of Heaven can only be entered after much labour, self-denial and conflict, and whatever road we choose to take, still we shall find it rough and difficult. But why not at least make it as easy as

we may ;—why go out of our way to mar our gratifications, when not unlawful nor immoderate ? The answer is, we are not called upon to deny our pleasures, but to give them a higher and more enduring character. And this is what the saints have ever experienced who have spent their lives in the work of self-subjugation. They were not insensible to surrounding objects : they did not affect a stoical indifference ; but the joys and sorrows of life were secondary and passing,—their thoughts were mainly fixed beyond. They may be considered as standing within the porch of the Temple ; exposed on all sides to the storm or sunshine, but their eyes fixed on the glories of the sanctuary, revealed through the half-opened door to their sight.

To cultivate therefore the inner life, to walk as closely with his God as he can, is the earnest Christian's first desire. He takes up the Cross, and finds it heavy at first, but he becomes habituated to it. The service of Christ is called a yoke, and so it is at the earlier stage, before the will hath become well broken, and the feet accustomed to keep the path. But as the sense of restraint gradually subsides, service itself becomes a delight, and the idea of duty is finally merged in that of privilege. A servant obeys the order he receives ; a son endeavours to forestall his father's

wishes, and is rather seeking what he may be permitted to do, what sacrifice to make, what work accomplish, than is careful to limit himself within a prescribed rule of obedience. It is true, when all is done we cannot outrun duty. Obligation will always exceed the utmost efforts of man to reach ; and weighed in the balance one and all will be found wanting, The best performances require pardon : all alike must be washed in the cleansing blood of the Saviour ; but the principle which leads to making every thing subservient to the single purpose of pleasing God, recommends each action to his favour and acceptance. As the planetary bodies move in concentric circles, but at various distances, and are variously affected by the light and heat of the sun, so do Christians very differently experience the influence of divine grace. Some seem so far removed as to feel its rays coldly, and see the image reflected but dimly on the soul: while others appear so close, that every sense is acted upon, and every faculty absorbed by the powerful attraction. Not that our portion is limited except by the demand, “To him that hath shall be given¹,” and the fountain is ever open and inexhaustible, when it is freely and habitually sought. This day by day doth he realize who is earnestly pressing forward to the

¹ Matt. xiii. 12.

high prize of his calling, with the standard of Christian perfection before his eyes towards which he continually advances. His faith becomes lost in spiritual vision ; his hope ripens into assurance from the testimony of his conscience : and his charity so enlarges and expands, that it can only find full scope in communion with those who dwell together in love, before Him who is love, in the blessed Mansion of Eternity.

Chapter XVI.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

(continued.)

“The Scripture is the sun, the Church is the clock whose hand points us to, and whose sound tells, the hour of the day.”

BISHOP HALL.

THE principle of association is a striking characteristic of God’s moral economy. In the Old Testament threats and promises are expressed towards the Jewish people collectively and nationally: and the same rule applies in the Gospel dispensation, where the gathering of the faithful into one communion and fellowship is the declared purpose of its Divine author. Hence the Christian believes “in one Catholic and Apostolic Church¹:” Catholic, as confined to no particular age or people; and Apostolic, as “built

¹ Nicene Creed.

upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone¹.” With this Church it is our blessed Lord hath declared that He will be present, “even unto the end of the world².” He is present with her here in her depressed, struggling, and militant state. He is present with that portion who are at rest from their labours in anticipation of His fuller manifestation: and He will be present through all eternity with His Church triumphant and glorified in the Heavens. It is in virtue of this corporate capacity that the “Communion of Saints” forms a leading article in our creed: and though now, as of old, “they are not all Israel which are of Israel³,” and the tares and the wheat grow up together; still to the Church of Christ on earth is entrusted the safeguard and preservation of Gospel truth: to her legitimate pastors is committed the administration of the Divine Mysteries; and her union, albeit imperfect here, is intended as a type and promise of her entire union hereafter.

As to the constitution of the visible Body of Christ⁴, they who may be disposed to deny that any permanent or binding rule is given in Scripture, must allow that there is no proof that any liberty, if it existed, was ever exercised: for we have the

¹ Eph. ii. 20. ² Matt. xxviii. 20. ³ Rom. ix. 6.

⁴ “Now ye are the Body of Christ,” 1 Cor. xii. 27.

undoubted evidence of ecclesiastical history, that the distinct orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were universally established at an early period : and Ignatius¹, moreover, contemporary with the latest among the Apostles, maintains in the strongest terms the high dignity and authority of the Episcopal office.

But though united under one Divine Head, and in the profession of one faith, the different branches of the Church Catholic were originally, and for a time held themselves, independent one of another, until the encroaching spirit of that of Rome during a period of darkness and ignorance usurped the ecclesiastical sovereignty of a large portion of the Christian world. By a strong effort this bondage was at length broken, and then it was that the overseers of God's vineyard planted in our land sought, and sought successfully, to restore it by the rule of scriptural doctrine, and primitive discipline. The holy work in such manner accomplished by our reformers (many of whom set to it the seal of their blood) received the civil sanction, and the Church, emancipated from papal

¹ "That Ignatius," says Dr. Burton, "may have been personally acquainted with some of the Apostles, is not only probable ; but the fact can hardly have been otherwise."—Eccl. Hist. vol. 1. p. 357.

tyranny, and purified in her teaching, became the system of worship authoritatively established.

The Church of England thus presents herself in a double point of view, as a part of the settled constitution of the land, and as a distinct religious community. Hence the Christian Gentleman, considering that she bears the stamp of Divine warrant, regards this holy institution with peculiar veneration, and examines into her claims on his obedience, not in a spirit of proud independence, but with deferential respect. He finds accordingly that a system of government, such as she possesses, may be traced back to the Apostolic age¹; and as the line of succession has continued unbroken, the outward character of a Church according to the primitive model he considers to have been in her preserved. Nor does she fail in her internal qualification for being a due recipient of

¹ The argument in favour of the primitive institution of Episcopacy is thus summed up by Chillingworth.

“Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church presently after the Apostles’ times.

“Between the Apostles’ times and them presently after there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great alteration.

“And therefore there was no such alteration as is pretended. And therefore Episcopacy, being confessed to be so ancient and catholic, must be granted also to be apostolic.” Apostolic Institution of Episcopacy demonstrated. Works, vol. ii. p. 288—290.

that gracious promise of support and preservation. She receives nothing to be believed as necessary to salvation, but what is found in or can be proved by Scripture¹; but as diversities of opinions may be, and too often have been, drawn from the same words, the Church, while she puts the sacred volume freely into the hands of all her members, offers her own explication of the fundamental truths contained in it. Nor does she presume to do so arbitrarily. The creeds, as defined and settled by the early Councils, she has accepted as the authoritative standard of orthodoxy: and the unanimous opinion of primitive antiquity affords her a faithful rule of interpretation on points which would otherwise be left to individual apprehension. Tradition is thus the interpreter, not the rival in authority with Scripture; and the value of such a standard will be duly appreciated by all who accept the Church as the pillar and ground of the truth², and desire to obey the Gospel injunction, “that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment³. ”

But here the question presents itself, as to the limit of Church authority. Must we receive all she dictates without hesitation or enquiry? Is not liberty of judgment a Christian birthright, claimed and secured at the Reformation? Are the

¹ 6th Article.

² 2 Tim. iii. 15.

³ 1 Cor. i. 10.

Scriptures put into our hands, and we controlled in the use of them? The Christian Gentleman feels that he is getting on debateable ground, hence he offers the opinion which he has formed according to the best of his ability, without presuming it to be a rule for others. With regard then to the questions above stated, he would reply, that he holds it to be incontestable that the Scriptures are open for the use of every member of Christ; that one and all are invited, nay commanded, to search them; and the sacred truths therein revealed are to be brought home to each individual conscience, since by them we shall be saved, or by them condemned; but as teachableness of spirit is the best qualification for receiving these truths aright, this will dispose the sincere enquirer to accept them with thankfulness in the light which the Church on due authority presents them. "My adherence is to the infallible rule of faith," says Archbishop Bramhall, "that is the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church, and not mine own private judgment or opinions:" and such is the language held almost unanimously by our early reformers and divines¹. If the Christian, then, "re-

¹ "That the early Church received a primitive Apostolical tradition can be abundantly proved. Tertullian says, "that is authoritative and true which is handed down from the first:—but that is extraneous and false which has been sent forth later."

ceive the engrafted word¹" with the meekness which is exhorted, and "enter not into doubtful disputations²," he has the promise of the truth, through the Spirit of truth³; and far from thinking obedience to the Church a bondage, he will rejoice in possessing so sure a guide to lead

De Præs. Hær. 31. And Vincentius of Lerins expressly states, that the Church affords a fixed rule of scriptural interpretation to prevent the wanderings of individual opinion. Commonit II. The idea of the Bible being its own interpreter to all and each who apply to it, appears to have sprung up during the controversies of later times. This however was not the doctrine of our Reformers. Both Cranmer and Ridley declare their adherence to primitive usage and antiquity. And those writers who were supposed to be least favourable to tradition can be shown to be arguing against the Roman, not Catholic tradition. Jewel for instance says, in his apology, "we are come as near as we possibly could to the Church of the Apostles and the old Catholic Bishops and Fathers, and have directed according to their customs and ordinances, not only our doctrine, but also the Sacraments and the form of Common Prayer." Even Chillingworth, whose dictum is so often quoted, "that the Bible and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Protestants :" writes thus, "All these things, and many more, are very strange to me, if the infallibility of the Roman Church be indeed, and always were by Christians acknowledged the foundation of our faith ; and therefore I beseech you pardon me if I choose mine upon one which is much firmer and safer, and lies open to none of these objections, which is, *Scripture and Universal Tradition.*"—Works, vol. ii. p. 498.

¹ James i. 21.

² Rom. xiv. 1.

³ John xvi. 13.

him “to speak things that become sound doctrine¹.”

Unity of faith, and holy fellowship among

¹ Titus ii. 1. Should it be urged, that by claiming the right of authoritative interpretation, the Church trenches upon the office of the Holy Ghost spiritually to enlighten the understanding ; it may be answered, it is not for a moment questioned that through the Spirit alone the sacred verities are to be apprehended. Nothing can be more clearly stated in Holy Writ ; but since the extraordinary operations of the Spirit have ceased, we have no reason ordinarily to expect an immediate *afflatus*. It has been the part of enthusiasm in all ages to imagine a direct impression or communication from heaven ; but in the unfolding of truth, as in His other dealings with men, means are employed by God. Now the Church claims to be this means, her rule of faith being that she believes to have been immediately derived from the Apostles ; and to her is the promise of the presence of her Divine Head, and of the teaching of His Spirit even to the end. It is accordingly, as members of the Church Catholic, that we are to look for the Spirit’s guidance into truth ; and if it be sought with fervent prayer, not only are we preserved from error, but the use of Scripture to private application becomes blessed and sanctified to “the saving of the soul.”

Before quitting this subject, I cannot but remark, that the objection of some to the adoption of creeds, as confining orthodoxy within too narrow limits, may be met by the fact, that in the 20th Article it is specifically declared, “that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s word written,” &c. Hence, though she may define more closely, and use language not found in Scripture, she can only do so in full accordance with Holy Writ. Indeed, these formularies were not resorted to from a dogmatical spirit of innovation, but were forced upon the Church by the heresies which sprung up in the early ages, and in

Christians are strongly enforced in the Apostolic writings. The Church is one, of which Christ is the head. “Ye are members one of another;” “that ye be like-minded;” “that there be no schism among you;” this we find often repeated; but the aspect of the religious world shows how fatally the purpose of the Divine Framer has in this been contravened. At an early period an antichristian spirit crept into the councils of the Church—divisions followed—the East separated from the West: and while the former has sunk into a state of moral torpidity, the latter through the three last centuries has presented one continued battle-field of strife and confusion, in which the body of Christ has been torn limb from limb. The Catholic Churchman laments over this state of things. He justly considers that the promises of God can be but partially expected, His gifts imperfectly given, in this dismembered condition: and he anxiously fixes his eyes on the horizon, watching for the first dawn of returning unity and peace. But however desirable that these divisions be healed; and that the Church appear once more in proportion as they increased in metaphysical subtlety, so was she obliged, as the appointed guardian of truth, more nicely to distinguish the confines of error. These creeds have ever since been retained as landmarks against the recurrence of false doctrine; and the Church acknowledging them as her standard of a right faith, they are binding on the consciences of her sons.

her pristine strength and glory, “terrible” against sin “as an army with banners¹ ;” he feels that this may never be brought about by the renunciation or suppression of a single tittle of divine Truth. The main body of the Western Church from which we are separated has been grossly perverted in doctrine and practice by unauthorized innovations and vain traditions. Her yoke we have shaken off as intolerable tyranny ; her corruptions we have renounced as anti-scriptural and degrading : and deep indeed would be the sin of our reformed branch were it to seek re-union with the vitiated stem. It is only when Rome shall formally surrender her groundless pretensions, and return to the simplicity of the Catholic faith, that we could again unite with her in holy fellowship : till then we must be content to hold her steadily at defiance. To parley with a power alike gigantic and insidious would be an act of treason : and even those who may think we have reformed too far, and who might wish that we had adhered somewhat more closely to the primitive model, and been acted upon less by foreign influence, will yet glory in the structure a merciful Providence has preserved, and trace its symmetry and beauty with content and gratitude. And if the conflict were ever renewed,—the “wild boar out of the wood” were to overrun

¹ Cant. vi. 4.

our vineyard ;—should persecution again raise its head ;—the sword be undrawn, the fires rekindled ;—and Scripture darkly forewarns that such times may yet be ;—the Christian Gentleman's prayer would be for strength and resolution to fight the good fight, constant even to the loss of all things, of life itself, for the truth's sake.

Well would it, however, have been if our divisions were only from without, but schism has eaten deep into the core of religion at home, and hostility and bitterness are too often heard among those who profess to be serving the same Master. Dissent may be traced to the time of the Reformation, when many in their zeal for the new tenets, considered the Church of England to have retained far too much of the corruption and “rags” of Popery, and seem to have acted upon the somewhat questionable position, that the extremest opposite to what is wrong must be nearest right. Various circumstances have occurred to increase and aggravate sectarianism ; and its evil effects are felt to every corner of the land. That schism is a sin of no common magnitude every unprejudiced reader of St. Paul's exhortations to unity must admit : and when it is maintained in the spirit of rebellion and proud self-will, as it must be confessed is too often the case, the account to be rendered will,

we doubt not, be a strict one¹. But since so many good and pious men have, and do still, continue without her pale, may it not be a question for the Church to enquire, is she to be held quite exempt from blame? Has she never addressed the wanderers but in terms of gentleness and affection; as a mother pleadeth with her erring children? Have her ministrations been faultless; no torpor invaded; no worldliness infected; no carnal-mindedness crept within her sacred fold? Has the Gospel uniformly been preached in its fulness and faithfulness from her pulpits: her services never abated of their frequency and devotion? Has she penetrated through the haunts of ignorance, misery, and sin; carrying instruction and reproof, and mercy and loving-kindness, through the length and breadth of the land? If she cannot satisfactorily answer these questions; if, especially

¹ It were well that some classes of modern theologians held closer on the point of schism to the opinion of one whose dogmas they for the most part take as their guide. "It is always fatally dangerous," says Calvin in the 4th book of his Institutes, "to be separated from the Church." In the same spirit he has said in a preceding part of his work: "I do not deny that many things are very obscure to us at present, and will continue to be so till we have cast off the burden of the flesh, and arrived nearer to the presence of God. On such subjects nothing would be more proper than a suspension of judgment, and a firm resolution to maintain union with the Church."

during the last century, she must acknowledge that she fell far short of her vocation, now when happily she has been recalled to better things, she will hasten to “redeem the time, because the days are evil¹:” and as she gradually exhibits her system in its full proportion and symmetry, she will “let her light so shine before men, that they may see her good works, and glorify her Father which is in heaven².” And her faithful son, though he will yield nothing he holds important, and counts concession on the part of the Church a want of confidence in her divine commission ; yet, in opposing the sectary with candour and moderation ; “not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing ;” anxious rather to smooth than aggravate differences, and to remove undue prejudices and misapprehensions,—humbly trusts that he is co-operating as far as in him lies, and in patient waiting on the will of God, towards bringing those who are without unto the fold of the one true Church ; that all they throughout the realm, who name the name of Jesus, may be “one body and one spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling³.”

That among those, however, who differ on essentials in religion, distrust and alienation should in some degree be found, is more to be regretted

¹ Eph. v. 16.

² Matt. v. 16.

³ Eph. iv. 4.

than wondered at from the frailty of human nature ; but amid such as are united in the fundamentals of Church-membership, it might have been hoped that whatever diversities of opinion did exist they would be held with mutual forbearance and tenderness. Yet it cannot be denied that this is not always the case. It is often among the last infirmities attaching to the farthest advanced Christian, in the stress he lays on one point of dissidence to overlook the "ninety and nine" of agreement : and in the keenness with which he supports his own conviction, to forget that infallibility belongs not to man. Due reflection, however, on the narrow limits assigned us, would tend effectually to check any assumption of unerring judgment. Such knowledge is too excellent for man. Truth is something so transcendental, so vast and comprehensive, that fully to embrace it is unattainable in this imperfect state. Bound as are the faculties within this tabernacle of clay, and shrouded the eyes by the veil of mortality, the strongest wing quickly fails in its upward flight, and the most penetrating vision is soon dazzled and confounded. Hence truth is beheld by none but indistinctly and partially. The devout inquirer is indeed led by the Spirit, who fails not to guide him towards the great object of his desire ; but He invests him not with supernatural powers,

and his perception, therefore, partakes of the imperfection of his condition. His visual compass cannot take in the whole circumference, at least clearly ; and the more intently he looks into one portion, the more apt will he be to lose sight of the other. Thus two individuals may seek with equal earnestness, yet they may almost fail to perceive the identity of the object from the different points in which they behold it. On the other hand, when this tendency is perceived, and endeavoured to be guarded against by taking a central position equidistant from extremes, there is a fear lest a dimness come over, and moderation degenerate into lukewarmness and indecision. The Christian Gentleman, then, while he strives to gain a middle view, so as to comprehend as much of the whole as his limited capacity allows, is equally anxious to lose nothing of zeal or depth of penetration, because his powers are not contracted to one point ; and conscious of his own liability to error, will regard those whose opinions may differ from his own with all meekness and brotherly kindness, and rejoice that their steps are together directed heavenward in the fellowship of a common faith. And when humbled with the view of human infirmities, from which the wisest and the best are not exempt, how doth his spirit

yearn for that time when the communion of saints will be undisturbed and complete ; and even as they have been washed in one blood, so will one voice arise of adoration and praise !

Chapter XVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN'S SABBATH.

“O my God, let me ever esteem it my privilege and my happiness to have a day of rest set apart for thy service and the concerns of my own soul ; to have a day free from distractions, disengaged from the world, wherein I have nothing to do but to praise and to love thee.”—BISHOP KEN.

To a state of toil, of conflict, and suffering, which in a more or less degree is common to every descendant of Adam, the idea of rest is pre-eminently grateful. It argues disorder of body or mind if either is unable or indisposed to enjoy this blessing ; and when wasted and worn by the trials and troubles of life, there is nothing more cheering to the weary pilgrim than the promise so graciously held up before him, “that there remaineth a rest to the people of God¹.”

¹ Heb. iv. 9.

It is as a type and foretaste of this eternal rest, remarkably prefigured in the very act of creation, the Christian regards that appointed to him weekly, for “on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it God rested from all His work which God created and made¹.” The Sabbath thus divinely instituted was re-enacted from Mount Sinai, and from its peculiar aptitude to the wants of our nature was embodied in the moral law; that law which our blessed Saviour came not to abrogate but to fulfil. Hence its perpetual enforcement; for though the time was changed in honour of our great moral re-creation, consummated on the first day of the week, which had thrown as it were into shade the glory of the original, not the less was it designed to be set apart and kept holy. And thankworthy is this institution to man, and to brutes dependent on man also, could they consciously express it! Is it nothing to have a duly returning season, when cessation from labour is not only invited but enjoined?—that a seventh portion of time is authoritatively appointed for recruiting the strength and refreshing the powers? If this were all, we

¹ Gen. ii. 2, 3.

should have abundant cause to be grateful for that mercy which deigns to remit so large a portion of our toil ; but while the cattle are left to lie down in their stalls, man is called to a higher and happier refreshment, a refreshment of spirit in the more immediate converse with his God.

In considering, therefore, the day so emphatically named by the name of the Lord, as especially to be devoted to His honour, the Christian Gentleman is not curious to dispute as to the strictness with which he is bound to observe it, since he reckons it even more a privilege than an obligation. In proportion as he can withdraw himself from outward distractions, and concentrate his thoughts on the divine image within his breast, so doth he rejoice as a bondsman set free, albeit for a season, from his galling chains. The world's is indeed a hard service, even to him whose hopes and prospects are elsewhere ; and to expatiate beyond its bounds is a festival to his soul,—an antepast of its future and more exalted enjoyment. Not, however, that he can freely do so, even in his happiest moments. The body is an incessant clog on the immortal part, and never more than when preparing for his Sabbath dedication does the humble follower experience the truth of his

blessed Master's words, "that the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak¹."

The Christian Gentleman then hails the dawn of the day of holy rest as the type of that day-spring which shall never close. He betakes himself by times to a meet preparation :—by an intimate self-inspection, that he may not approach his God "with unwashen hands;" by deep meditation on the volume of revealed truth; and by fervent seeking of the "spirit of supplication," that his prayer and praise may not issue out "of feigned lips." And now the bell that summons to the immediate presence of his Maker bursts upon his ear "with a merry sound." Right pleasant is it to see the assembling throng with one accord pressing towards His temple-gate:—faint shadow of those collected myriads who shall one day claim admittance within the portals of heaven ! As his steps pass the sacred threshold, fain would his heart respond to the enraptured Psalmist,— "How amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hosts, my soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God²." The service commences:—how exquisitely adapted in all its parts to the necessities of our weak and sinful

¹ Matt. xxvi. 41.

² Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2.

nature ! The humble prostration and confession of guilt—"we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done ; and there is no health in us :"—then the cheering message of absolution,—“He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel :”—the summing up of our wants in that comprehensive form of words, which Christ himself delivered to us :—those songs bequeathed us by “the sweet Psalmist of Israel.” where each soul findeth something congenial to its frame ;—the selected portions of the Divine word :—the more minute outpouring of “a contrite heart,” in the Litany :—the general supplication “for all sorts and conditions of men ;” for our Sovereign and rulers, temporal and spiritual ; for “all who are afflicted and distressed ;” and “for the good estate of the Catholic Church.” Add to this the harmony which from time to time is poured forth, wherein, feeble as we are, we are yet permitted to unite with the Hallelujahs which are pealing through creation. While joining heart and voice in these sublime services, truly doth the Christian Gentleman confess the admirable wisdom and piety manifested in their construction, and that the guidance of the Spirit was indeed with our fathers in their glorious work !

But guiding and training are necessary that the worship which hath proceeded from the lips be not barren and unproductive. When enlarged, therefore, by confession, and thanksgiving, and praise, the soul becomes fitted for instruction in holiness, and submits itself to the teaching of him whose special duty it is to correct and reprove, to encourage and edify. And if the Gospel is fully expounded from the pulpit ; if faith and obedience are never divided, if the message of mercy and reconciliation is affectionately delivered, and repentance and amendment zealously urged ; the embassage is doubly blest,—it blesseth him that speaks and them that hear. And on that great day when the accounts are given in, scarcely will there be joy surpassing his who shall present at the bar of Heaven the trust committed to him, the souls that by his ministry were sought and saved.

Next comes that portion of the service of the Sanctuary so elevating to every truly Catholic spirit. First are heard those commands once delivered with terror and majesty from Sinai, now reiterated, but in far broader fulfilment, from that part of God's House which primitive usage has more immediately dedicated to His glory. Then follow those deep and holy Mysteries which cannot be participated in without risk of

profanation, unless there be a due preparation of the heart. When the Christian renews his vows at the altar, and partakes in faith of the consecrated elements, he is mystically united with his Redeemer, “for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us¹. ” And great is the benefit to those who receive worthily, duly considering the Lord’s body². A special supply of grace is afforded to the soul, which is “strengthened and refreshed” by this spiritual sustenance. And the oftener we draw near to the heavenly banquet, the more we find both of profit and enjoyment. “The hunger and thirst after righteousness” are rather

¹ Those whose religious system leads to a lowering of the Sacraments, have not at least the high authority of the great Genevan Reformer to support them. In the fourth book of the Institutes Calvin thus writes : “of all these things we have so full a witness in this Sacrament, that we must as certainly determine that Christ is truly given us, as if Christ himself were set present before our eyes, and handled with our hands, for the words cannot lie nor mock us, “Take, eat, drink,” &c. Inst. 4. B. 4 and 5.

In one of his letters to Melanchthon too, he mentions as a point on which he agrees with Luther, “that the sacraments are not empty signs:” and he afterwards states, that “in baptism the power of the Spirit is present to wash and regenerate us; and that the sacred supper is a spiritual feast, in which we truly feed on the flesh and blood of Christ.”

² Communion Service.

stimulated than appeased; and the frequent attendants at the Lord's table are thereby rendering themselves readier and fitter guests for the marriage-feast of the Lamb in the "kingdom of His Father."

It is not, then, without reason that the ritual of his Church is endeared to the Christian Gentleman. Its language is appropriate to every state and condition. It encourages the weak-hearted, and it raises the drooping; and while it warms and elevates the cold and earth-bound, it tempers the fervid and checks extravagance. Since his wants and desires are ever the same, he needs no variety of expression; and as supplications which are made "with one accord" have a special promise of acceptance, he rejoices in the thought that the prayers he utters have been uttered by his fathers through successive generations¹, and are at the same moment arising in grateful unison from every corner of his native land. Far from palling on his ear from their weekly recurrence, he considers it a privilege, if opportunity allow, to join in the services of the Church on intermediate days, especially on those she has marked for the observance of her fasts and festivals: and he reckons the order of her calendar as eminently qualified to recall the whole round of Christian

¹ See Note at the end of the Chapter.

faith and obedience. When noise, and distraction, and trouble are without, there is peace within the walls of the Lord's house ; and thither would he look for a sanctuary where his spirit may retreat ; "a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall¹."

In proportion, then, as he enters into the system of the Church, does the Christian Gentleman's mind expand as to the principles on which this system is erected. Not only does he consider her the authorized vehicle by which divine truth is handed down and preserved, but he penetrates deeper, and perceives her capacity for filling that void which the unsatisfactoriness of every thing below occasions to a spirit seeking and never finding that whereon it can rest. It is the City of God, wherein the common ties of humanity, whether of kindred or of country, assume a closer and more endearing character. And as "all are members one of another," his sympathy is enlivened with suffering and distress ; and he realizes with Catholic charity the apostle's injunction, "Love one another." In the Communion of Saints too, he recognizes a chain which, commencing with those "who died in faith, having seen the promises afar off¹," was continued under

¹ Isaiah xxv. 4.

¹ Heb. xi. 13.

the latter and better dispensation ; and he delighteth to contemplate that “cloud of witnesses” which he trusts hereafter to see assembled before the throne of God, from all nations, tongues, and languages.

Thus looking on the Church as symbolical of a high and invisible state, her ceremonials and emblems assume an importance which the gainsayer may ridicule, and the casual observer not perceive. Her ordinances come with a fuller significance ; her mysteries fill him with deeper awe ; and even her sacred edifices appear to him with peculiar interest, as embodying the idea of that “house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens¹. ”

A similar sentiment too will influence his conduct towards those more immediately appointed to her service. He will venerate their office, and respect their persons : and, indeed, scarcely is there a tie more binding than the pastoral, where the charge is exercised with affectionate fidelity on the one side, and duly appreciated and responded to on the other.

Considering, moreover, the Church as the fittest almoner of his bounty, he directs his benevolence for the most part into such channels as she points out, and in institutions for the purpose of extending and propagating religion, though confined within no narrow exclusiveness, he preferably joins and

¹ 2 Cor. v. i.

gives his support to such as are connected with the ecclesiastical Establishment, if not under its special jurisdiction.

The public services of the Church over, the Christian Gentleman seeks a kindly and congenial pleasure within the limits of his domestic circle. Of society on a larger scale he of course disapproves, yet as Sunday is not a season of gloom, but rather brightened by the beams of God's mercy and beneficence, he delights to participate in a tempered cheerfulness¹.

As the shades of night draw round him, now retired to the privacy of his closet, the serious objects to which his thoughts have been so much dedicated will be apt to summon up an array of solemn images ; as if his soul sought a freer and more expanded range, ere recalled to the course of weekly duties and cares. The approaching consummation of all earthly things rises before him ; the stupendous mystery of redemption revealed before the assembled throng of men and angels ; the day of judgment and its terrors, so vividly pictured by Bishop Taylor, when “amazement is the king of all our passions, and all the world its subjects : and that shriek must needs be terrible,

¹ In conversing, too, instructively, with the young especially, he finds appropriate employment for the closing hours of that sacred day.

when millions of men and women at the same instant shall fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the Archangel, and the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens, and the crack of the dissolving world, and the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes¹.” Then the scene will change to ineffable brightness, and the mighty Victor will appear with sin and death beneath His feet, and glory, and honour, and majesty on His brow, and principalities and powers, and all the multitude of heaven; and the noble army of martyrs, and just men made perfect; and innumerable voices, “ten thousand times ten thousand,” ever praising Him and saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever².”

When the soul returns from such visions as these to the habitual level of thought and feeling, their reality does not pass away: and though the infidel may sneer, and the worldling disregard, amid commotions without, and disquietude within, faith speaks in a voice still more audible and distinct, that “these things are certain, and near at hand¹.”

¹ Jer. Taylor, Sermon on the Advent. Works, vol. v. p. 2.

² Rev. v. 11. 13. ³ Sherlock, Dis. vol. iii. p. 19.

NOTE.

The ancients held public prayer in high estimation. St. Basil says in one of his epistles, “ For even prayer itself, when it hath not the consort of many voices to strengthen it, is not itself.” And St. Chrysostom in his Homily on the Hebrews, has a passage to the following effect, “ that the House of prayer is a Court beautified with the presence of celestial powers, and there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns unto God, having his angels intermingling as our associates.”

After quoting these passages, Hooker, in his masterly defence of the Book of Common Prayer, thus writes. “ No doubt from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of His singular care and providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescript form of Common Prayer, although not in all things every where the same, yet for the most part retaining still the same analogy. So that if the liturgies of all ancient churches throughout the world be compared amongst themselves, it may easily be perceived they had all one original mould, and that the public prayers of the people of God in churches throughout, settled, did never use to be voluntary dictates from any man’s extemporal wit¹.”

It may not be out of place to add a more detailed account of the antiquity of the Liturgical form of worship from an eminent modern writer. “ After a careful examination of the primitive liturgies of the Christian Church, it appears to me that they may all be reduced to four, which have been used in different churches from a period of profound antiquity. The first may be entitled *the great Oriental Liturgy*, as it seems to have prevailed in all the

¹ Hooker, Eccl. Pol. b. v. 24, 25, Keble’s edit.

Christian Churches from the Euphrates to the Hellespont, and from the Hellespont to the southern extremities of Greece. The second was the *Alexandrian*, which from time immemorial has been the liturgy of Egypt, Abyssinia, and the country extending along the Mediterranean sea towards the west. The third was the *Roman*, which prevailed throughout the whole of Italy, Sicily, and the civil diocese of Africa. The fourth was the *Gallican*, which was used throughout Gaul and Spain, and probably in the exarchate of Ephesus, until the fourth century. These four great Liturgies appear to have been the parents of all the forms now extant, and indeed, of all which we can in any manner discover ; and their antiquity was so very remote, their use so extensive in those ages when bishops were most independent, that it seems difficult to place their origin at a lower period than the apostolic age. The liberty which every Christian Church plainly had and exercised, in the way of improving its formularies, confirms the antiquity of the four great liturgies ; for where this liberty existed it could have been scarcely anything else but reverence for the apostolic source from which the original liturgies were derived, that prevented an infinite variety of formularies, and preserved the substantial uniformity which we find to have prevailed in vast districts of the primitive Church. There can be little, if any, doubt that Christian liturgies were not at first committed to writing, but preserved by memory and practice (to avoid profanation). However, this did not prevent a substantial uniformity from being continually kept up. Each Church might very easily preserve uniformity in its own liturgy ; and if all who had originally received the same followed this plan, a general uniformity would be the result. That each Church preserved continually the same liturgy is certain....We have, therefore, the best reasons for affirming that the Catholic Church from the beginning has always preserved an uniform order of liturgy. But this uniformity did not exclude improvement and variety. The bishop of each Church appears plainly to have possessed the authority of improving his

own liturgy by the addition of new ideas and rites ; and the exercise of this power, either individually or collectively, accounts for the variations which we find in those liturgies now extant, originally derived from the same model ; nor does it seem that variety of expression under certain regulations were excluded at any time by the Christian Church.”—PALMER, *Origines Liturgicae*, v. i. p. 8.

Respecting the antiquity of the Anglican ritual, the same learned author writes : “ It will be seen that Romanists are loud in their hostility to our liturgy, which in form and substance rather resembles the ancient Gallican, Spanish, Egyptian, and Oriental liturgies than the Roman ; while the expressions of our ritual are rather taken from those liturgies just mentioned, or else from the ancient English offices which had been used in this country from the sixth century, and were *then* derived from the primitive Roman offices of the first four or five centuries after Christ. So that most of the expressions of the English ritual have continued in this church for fourteen hundred years ; many parts we trace back for sixteen hundred years ; much to the apostolic age. If the modern Roman offices bear any resemblance to the English, it is in those points in which both resemble the offices of the primitive Church.”—*Orig. Liturg.* v. ii. p. 2.

Chapter XVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN IN HIS DECLINE.

“ What a strange moment will that be,
My soul, how full of curiosity,
When winged and ready for thy eternal flight,
On the utmost verges of thy tottering clay
Hovering, and wishing longer stay,
Thou shalt advance, and have eternity in sight !
When just about to try that unknown sea,
What a strange moment shall that be !”

NORRIS OF BEMERTON.

As we are sent into the world, to inhabit for a while, and then withdraw to make room for others, it seems a merciful disposition of Providence that the temporary nature of our occupancy should be kept before our view. Such is the tendency of man to live by sight rather than by faith, that were his progress marked by no diminution of powers, no exterior or inward change; though he

might be conscious that he would not remain for ever, still he would be tempted to regard his removal so vague as to time, that preparation would be indefinitely deferred, and society would be rendered less stable and secure when constantly exposed to unexpected dismemberment.

But by sensible decline being the ordinary rule, none can easily mistake that he is pressing onwards, and, though he escape the contingencies which may at any moment arrest him, that he is certainly hastening towards his journey's end. The Christian Gentleman, then, is careful to observe the notices advancing years may bring with them. He desires rather to meet the approach of age than to turn away ; and every sign of it he can detect he considers a warning, which he suffers not to pass unheeded. He is anxious not to be taken by surprise, and each increase of infirmity speaks the more audibly, “Set thy house in order, for thou shalt surely die¹.” He gradually then retires from the more active concerns of life, and “communeth” more closely “with his own heart, and in his chamber²,” that when the Bridegroom cometh, he may be found watching, with his lamp trimmed and his loins girded³. The more rightly to comprehend

¹ 2 Kings xx. 1.

² Ps. iv. 4.

³ Luke xii. 35, 36.

how his account stands, he casts a frequent eye over his past life. He sees trials and deliverances, afflictions and mercies, blended along the whole course of his career; and then the question arises, which it imports him to decide, wherefore they were sent, and whether their object has been duly accomplished. That we are brought into existence for some specific purpose, which cannot be fully effected here, may be considered sufficiently evident. A perfect Being requires service from His creatures, which at least must approach towards perfection; but the highest efforts of man in his best estate are so marked with infirmity, that it can only be in some future and more advanced stage that he will be enabled adequately to do his Master's will.

Now without venturing to pry into the hidden things of God, it may not be too much to affirm, that we can distinctly discover our course of discipline to be intended for a double purpose. The first is to restore us from the effects which sin hath produced upon our weak and vitiated natures, and to bring back the wandering sheep into the fold; the other, that we may be trained and prepared now for the peculiar service to which we shall be called hereafter, unless the intent be frustrated by our obstinate rebellion. It can

hardly be an unwarranted presumption to suppose, that every dealing of Providence with us, marked and varied as it is to each, has reference to this ultimate design; and as we could not enjoy heaven without some previous forming of the taste, so would our powers be inadequate to their future employment, unless in some degree exercised to that employment now. Surely it might reconcile some who are tempted to complain that their lot is so much harder than that of others around them, to be convinced that they are proving and strengthening their faculties for special action in a higher state of being; and doubtless it will be a cause of grateful enjoyment to discover how adapted were our trials and troubles to carry this great object into effect. For such revelation then of the ways and workings of Providence the Christian may hope beyond the grave; the more immediate purpose of his inquiry now is, how far he has thereby profited towards his soul's salvation. The retrospect will indeed affect and humble him to the dust. His course has been one of beneficence on the part of God, and of slowness of heart and ingratitude on his own; yet though his merciful Father was "provoked every day," He never left him, never forsook him; but though "with rebukes He may

have chastened him for sin¹,” He hath brought him within the sight of that “ pleasant land,” and even now is at hand to lead him across the stream. Thus in watchfulness and prayer doth he wait the coming of his Lord, and approving conscience permits him in some measure to respond, through the humble confidence of hope, to the joyful words of the Apostle: “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing².”

But it may be that decline is anticipating age, and the body wasting with premature decay. The finger of God may be distinctly pointing to the dial, and symptoms mark,—marking which cannot be misunderstood,—that the fleshly tabernacle will be speedily dissolved. And never is faith more triumphantly exhibited than it often appears on the bed of sickness and pain! A modern writer thus eloquently describes the effect produced on his mind by witnessing the conduct of a Christian under the stroke of affliction:—“ In

¹ Psalm xxxix. 12.

² 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

the review of my own varied intercourse with society, I confess nothing so vividly and powerfully affects me as what I recollect to have met with from pious individuals exemplifying the spirit and resources of Christians under bodily disease, and the losses, and bereavements, and disappointments of life. O ! when I have visited such a martyr, such a witness for God, when I have found him standing in the evil day, like a rock in a raging current with sunshine on its brow ; when I have observed him full of tribulation in the world, and of peace in Christ ; mourning more for his sins than his sorrows ; afraid of dishonouring his profession by impatience and unbelief ; more concerned to have his crosses sanctified than to have them removed ; turning a tearful eye towards the Inflictor, and saying, 'I know, Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me : just and true are all Thy ways, O Thou King of saints : He hath done all things well.' When I have witnessed Religion—and I have witnessed it—accomplishing achievements like these, I have said to it, as I withdrew, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee¹.' "

¹ Jay, "Christian Contemplated," Lecture 7.

Philosophy may boast of her triumphs as she will, and she may succeed perhaps in lulling into calm placidity the natural reluctance of the parting spirit; but it is reserved for something far higher and better, to meet the approach of death with true serenity and peace. When discipline and trial have so well done their work that the Christian feels all rebellion suppressed within him:—when his will is absorbed into the will of his Father, and he is conscious that, resting on His disposal, he hath not a thought or desire beyond:—when acquiescence has risen into thankful concurrence, and resignation is lost in gratitude and joy:—when he thinketh less of the pain than of the privilege of suffering;—then is it that the flesh is subdued unto the spirit; and whether the wasting unrest of decaying powers, or the acuter throbs and anguish of more violent dislocation, announce the breaking up of this mortal frame, he is not dismayed,—his heart standeth firm, and stedfast in faith, he faces the enemy with a tranquil and unaverted eye.

And animating indeed is the prospect which often opens, when the soul is thus expecting its summons! The veil which concealed the unseen world is removed, and it beholds myriads of beings employed through the universe in carrying into effect the behests of their Lord—it perceives

its own change into a state of intermediate preparation ; and in its reunion with the refined and glorified body, presenting at the great day in their common perfectionment, a ready instrument for whatever purpose they may be designed. Perfect joy—perfect love—perfect harmony around—worship undepressed by languor—action unaccompanied with toil—service ever delightful to render, and ever received with gracious complacency, and this in the more immediate presence of the Source itself of light and life—such is perhaps part of that beatific vision which may be whiles permitted to burst on the eye of faith as departure draweth near.

But the dying Christian is not so much engrossed with the scenes into which he is about to enter, as to be insensible to the objects he is leaving. Towards those connected with him by ties of kindred and endearment his affections seem to yearn with increasing tenderness ; yet the pain of separation is modified and tempered by the comfortable prospect that it is only for a time. They are ever present in his thoughts and prayers ; not that they may prosper on earth, though that he may desire, but that where he is going they may in due time follow. And when his hour arrives, and they assemble around him, and he pours forth his latest breath in their behalf, who

can tell but that it rises with prevailing efficacy to their benefit through all eternity?

So guided in life and supported in death, “ Lo, THUS SHALL THE MAN BE BLESSED THAT FEARETH THE LORD¹.”

¹ Psalm cxxviii. 3.





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